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SUPER PLAY

ISSUE 8

JUNE 1993

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DRIVING GAME SPECIAL

NIGEL MANSELL, EXHAUST HEAT 2 AND MORE!

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- TIPPED! BATMAN RETURNS AND MORE!
- SO, HOW DO YOU DESIGN A SNES GAME?
- HOT NEWS! STREET FIGHTER II TURBO IS COMING!

HUNDREDS OF GOODIES TO BE WON! Turn to p24

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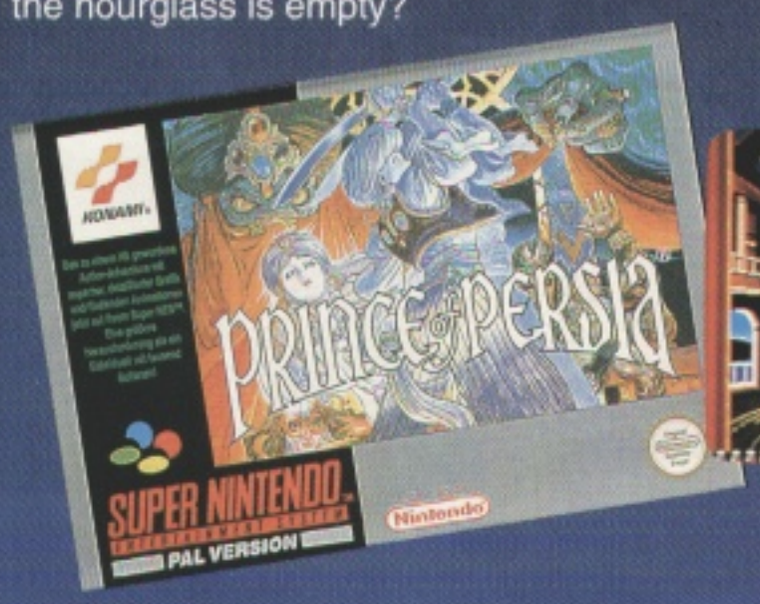

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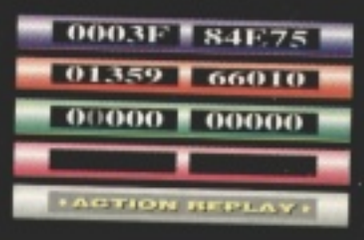

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Super Play

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Future PUBLISHING

SUPER PLAY EDITORIAL

FROM THE BIG CHAIR

TWICE IS THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE: SUPER PLAY GOES FORTNIGHTLY! (SORT OF)

Our full contents listing starts just over the page

We've got a few special things for you this month. First, a load of competitions – I thought we'd been slacking a bit in this area recently, so here's a whole slew of the things might make up for it. This month we're also proud to present a massive player's guide to game-of-the-moment *Starfox*, a detailed look at the processes behind the creation of a typical SNES game, and a (slightly) different look to our cover. What d'you think?

Next month, though, things get even better – the main reason being that two issues of *Super Play* will go on sale! What's this? Are we going fortnightly or something? Well, no, not exactly. What's happening is we'll have issue 9 out as normal (in the shops on 3 June, details-fans), and then, on top of that (for one month only) we'll have a special edition – *Super Play Gold: The Complete UK Software Guide*. This follows a week later, gets printed on brilliant extra-glossy paper, and acts as a complete beginner's guide for anyone who's bought a Super Nintendo over the last six months. Not only will it feature brand new reviews of every Super NES game officially released in Britain, each one comes complete with a tip, cheat or even complete playing guide too! Then there's a complete buying guide to all the SNES add-ons available, an updated history of the machine, and special features on everything from the Super FX chip to the Super NES CD. It's sort of like a *Super Play* Summer Special, and should be essential reading for every Super NES fan. We'll have more details next month, but in the meantime, note the day it comes out – 10 June.

Finally, we've got a reader survey this issue. Yes, we know we had one back in issue 1, but quite a few things have changed since then – chiefly that loads of you have joined us, and we know next to nothing about you. Please take the trouble to fill this one out – it's only through finding out what you like and don't like that we can make *Super Play* even more the magazine you want to read.

Matt Bielby

Matt Bielby
Editor

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

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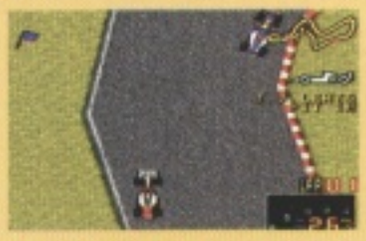

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SUPER EXP

This month in Super Express: great FES show news; hundreds of previews of cool new games; our new Super Nintendo gossip column – hosted by some little chaps you *might* recognise – starts; all your favourite regulars; and, to start with, perhaps the two single hottest news items in *Super Play* history..!

DOUBLE SCOOP!

• Capcom announce Street Fighter II Turbo!

(Mega Drive owners, eat your hearts out!)

Yes, it's true! After months of speculation, Capcom – developer and publisher of *Street Fighter II*, the fastest selling video game of all time – has announced that a second version of the game will be coming to the Japanese Super Famicom in 1993! Based on the recent, and incredibly popular, 'Turbo' arcade version, *Street Fighter II Turbo*, (or *Turbo Street Fighter II: Champion Edition – Hyper Fighting*, to give it its full arcade title!), was announced at a recent conference in Japan, and is supposed to be appearing this Summer. It's expected to arrive around the same time as the Mega Drive and PC Engine versions of the *Champion Edition* in June.

Exclusive! These are the first pics of Super NES *SFII Turbo*, plus artwork!

This is, of course, tremendous news for Super NES *SFII* fans – and, at the same time, a great blow to Sega Mega Drive owners. After all, *Street Fighter II: Champion Edition* – potentially a better game than the existing Super NES version – was to have been Sega's way of thumbing its nose at *SF*-mad SNES owners (and maybe steal a few gameplayers away from Nintendo in the process). Now, however, Super Nintendo players

JUNE 1993 ISSUE 8

SUPER PLAY PROFILES

Our likes and hates (but mostly hates)...

MATT BIELBY

Worst day of the week: Monday
Afraid of: Heights, car crashes
Don't like eating: Olives
Or drinking: Tango
Most hated TV show: *Crimewatch UK*, *Eldorado*, local news shows
Don't tend to get on with: Jehovah's Witnesses
Biggest turn-off: White handbags
Would like to be buried: At sea
Disappointment of the month: *Cool World*
I've been playing: *Pop'n Twin Bee*, *Exhaust Heat II*

SUE GRANT

Worst day of the week: Sunday
Afraid of: The dentist
Don't like eating: Rice pudding
Or drinking: Malibu
Most hated TV show: *One Foot In The Grave*
Don't tend to get on with: People who buy from The Conran Shop
Biggest turn-off: Hairy backs
Would like to be buried: In my garden
Disappointment of the month: *Outlander*
I've been playing: *Tetris* (again!)

JASON BROOKES

Worst day of the week: Sunday
Afraid of: Being run over
Don't like eating: Broad beans
Or drinking: Warm full-cream milk
Most hated TV show: *The Upper Hand*
Don't tend to get on with: The fuzz
Biggest turn-off: Cellulite
Would like to be buried: In a field
Disappointment of the month: *Super Strike Eagle*
I've been playing: *Solstice 2*

have the most involving, up-to-date and downright hippest version of them all to look forward to just after the Mega Drive *Champion Edition* appears. It could hardly have been better planned to take the wind out of Sega's sales...

● Capcom USA claims a US version of *SFII Turbo* is 'under consideration, but not yet planned'. With Sega preparing its Mega Drive *Champion Edition* for global release in June, surely a UK release of *Turbo* can't be far down the line either? (Last time it took three-and-a-half months for *SFII* to get here after its Japanese debut.) More details next issue!

● Nintendo announce hot new *Super Mario Collection*!!

Four games on one cart!

After a gap of well over two years *Mario* is set to return in a new platform game release. However, *Super Mario Collection*, as the name suggests, isn't a fifth instalment of the *Mario* series (it seems likely that will be held over for CD ROM next year), but is actually a compilation of four classic *Mario* games from the 8-bit Famicom, all bundled into one Super Famicom cartridge.

The four games are: *Super Mario Brothers* (the original classic), *Super Mario Brothers 2* (the superior Japanese version, never released in the West), *Super Mario Brothers 3*, and *Super Mario USA* (the Japanese name for the US/UK version of *Super Mario Brothers 2*, originally called *Doki Doki Panic* in Japan). Phew! It isn't known if graphics and sound will be enhanced (but we expect they will). The game will be launched in July in Japan, with UK/US dates possibly following.

Street Fighter II wins game of the year!

Plus, all the other news from the recent London Trade Show

Spring ECTS

Islington Business Design Centre 4–6 April

This year's Spring ECTS (European Computer Trade Show) was easily the most console-dominated so far. Amiga and ST stuff was thin on the ground, 8-bit computers barely mentioned at all, and though PC software made a strong showing, it was mainly Super Nintendo and Mega Drive (especially Mega CD) stuff. The show, which isn't open to the public, is basically a trade fair, where the European computer and video game industry get together – along with an increasing number of US and Japanese visitors – to show off their new products, announce new deals, and get drunk together. Stands are generally fairly small and businesslike, with the only real bits of obvious showbiz being people walking around in giant Disney-style outfits. We saw a Bubsy, an Alfred Chicken and a James Pond amongst others.

But what of the games? Some, of course, weren't finished, but others were. Storm's *Lawnmower Man II* (right), based on the new film sequel, looked together already. Built up of a series of different levels, it featured horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-up bits, and some great 'inside a computer' flying sequences – impressive stuff for a 4 Mbit game.

Another game that caught our eye was Empire's new Don Bluth game (left). Yes, it's *Space Ace* again, but with a difference – this is a 25 level affair, featuring platform and shoot-'em-up bits, amongst others.

But enough of the games – many of them you'll find are previewed elsewhere in Super Express. There's still one last part of the show to cover – the ECTS awards. Voted for by journalists from 80 game mags across Europe, and held at London's Limelight club, they were remarkable mainly for the fact that US Gold swept the board across most categories (the result of the strong showing by PC/Amiga games like *Monkey Island 2*). However, Electronic Arts won best software house, and *Street Fighter II* picked up awards for best action/arcade game, best video game and overall game of the year. Finally, the Super Nintendo deservedly walked away with the best hardware award. Seems there's some justice in the world after all...

JONATHAN DAVIES

Worst day of the week: Tuesday
Afraid of: Lions
Don't like eating: Raisins and sultanas
Or drinking: Lemon squash
Most hated TV show: *The Clothes Show*
Don't tend to get on with: Royalty
Biggest turn-off: Cigarettes
Would like to be buried: In a forest
Disappointment of the month: *Super Strike Eagle*
I've been playing: *Nigel Mansell, Devil's Course*

LISA NICHOLLS

Worst day of the week: Friday
Afraid of: Tramps and drunks
Don't like eating: Fish in general
Or drinking: Soft drinks
Most hated TV show: *Knotts Landing*
Don't tend to get on with: Nobody, 'cos I'm nice
Biggest turn-off: Moon boots
Would like to be buried: I don't want to be buried
Disappointment of the month: *Super F1 Hero*
I've been playing: *Syo The Seal*

JEREMY BRIDGEMAN

Worst day of the week: Tuesday
Afraid of: Snakes and spiders
Don't like eating: Mushy peas
Or drinking: Guinness
Most hated TV show: *On The Up*
Don't tend to get on with: People who are racist
Biggest turn-off: Saggy bits
Would like to be buried: In Père Lachaice (in Paris) – the place where Jim Morrison was buried
Disappointment of the month: *USA Ice Hockey*
I've been playing: *Exhaust Heat II*

SUPER PLAY PROFILES QUIZ

Your task this month is to work out which member of the *Super Play* team, while holidaying in Greece, had to spend a week feeding his/her travelling companion through the bars of the local prison, after the hapless chum had been put away for a crime he'd rather was withheld from print. Send your answer, on the back of a postcard, to Mixing With The Wrong Company, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and you might win a T-shirt. Last month's answer: Lisa Nicholls was our precocious stage star, as spotted by Adrian Murphy of Plymouth.

ONLY IN JAPAN

The Land Of The Rising Sun is also the Land Of The Bloody Weird Little Factoid. Quite handy for this column, really...

GAME THEFTS SOAR IN JAPAN!

Though Japan is generally a very safe, crime-free country, trouble *does* occur – some of it related to Super Famicom games. We've run reports on kids being mugged for games like *Final Fantasy V* on their way home from the shops.

Inside a typical game swap shop – stolen games are causing real problems in Japan.

Now it seems second-hand game exchange shops like Blade, TV Panic and Wanpak – popular in Japan – are being forced to ban kids under 11 from selling their games there *at all*, while 11 to 15-year-olds will need parental consent to do so. Hopefully this will stop kids from nicking their friends games and then swapping them or selling them on.

JAPANESE SCHOOLS: A CALCULATOR-FREE ZONE!

Imagine never being able to use a calculator in math lessons? In Japan they can't – schools still teach their pupils using the abacus. As you might imagine, calculator producers Casio and Sharp aren't happy about this, and are embarking on campaigns to encourage their use in the classroom. As yet it's unclear as to whether pupils will be allowed to bring their own to school or not. Now is it just us, or do *you* find it almost impossible to believe they've managed to keep hi-tech out of the classroom so long too?

ANOTHER SF II CHALLENGER!

Takara's 16 Mbit *Fatal Fury 2* to hit Japan; Takara get a UK foothold

Terry, Andy and Joe prepare for their latest 16 Mbit scrap.

The Japanese software house behind titles such as *GPX Cyber Formula* (*Cyber Spin* in the States), and Neo Geo conversions like *King Of The Monsters* and *Fatal Fury*, is to receive proper UK distribution. Adam Leisure, a company that's until now concentrated on cheap LCD games, plans to start releasing the Takara stuff from late Summer. Meanwhile, *Fatal Fury 2* is out in Japan. It features five new characters alongside regulars Andy,Terry and Higashi Joe, plus a great plane jump sequence!

Left and above: *Fatal Fury 2* on the Super Famicom. The Neo Geo game is the *only* thing that's *ever* tempted us into *GamesMaster*'s office.

THE BITCH IS BACK!

Alien³ (Acclaim)

The movie had its moments, but was generally a dreary affair. The game is better.

Here at *Super Play* we're in agreement when it comes to *Alien* ³ – we thought the film was rubbish (especially in the light of the brilliant first two). So, we weren't holding out much hope for the game.

Imagine our surprise, then, when we saw this. You see, Acclaim's *Alien*³ is actually turning out rather well. Rather than simply port over the already-decent Mega Drive version, Probe have rewritten the game for the SNES – in the process coming up with a game to hold its own against such serious competition as *Super Star Wars*, *Super Probotector*, *Cybernator* et al.

*Alien*³ is packed with clever lighting effects and great parallax scrolling, reminiscent of Ocean's latest *Addams Family* game. The game looks a treat – Ripley is a sight to behold too, brilliantly animated throughout. She *does* look a bit awkward when jumping, but otherwise this is superb – lots of animation frames making for smooth movement through a fab range of firing angles.

Aesthetics aren't the only area that's been improved over the Mega Drive version though. It seems there's also a new level of depth to the gameplay. While the Mega Drive and Amiga versions were conversions of the *Aliens* coin-op, our version adds computer terminals that you can access en route, and scrolling blueprints of the levels which you'll need to make it through the game. *Alien*³ is scheduled for release around June/July in this country. US and Japanese releases will probably coincide and, naturally, we'll be reviewing the finished version soon.

This great flamethrower is but one of many fab weapons. It's our fave though.

Scrolling blueprints are accessible.

This bald Ripley sprite provides a watchable, smoothly-animated centrepiece to the game. Oodles of poses too!

IT'S ON ITS WAY! R-TYPE III

(Irem)

One glance at the new game tells you it's *R-Type* alright. *Very* familiar.

including the Force Ball you stick to the front of your ship – are included too. We can't wait for this game, but we may have to – a Japanese release date hasn't been announced yet, and the game's UK future is even more unclear.

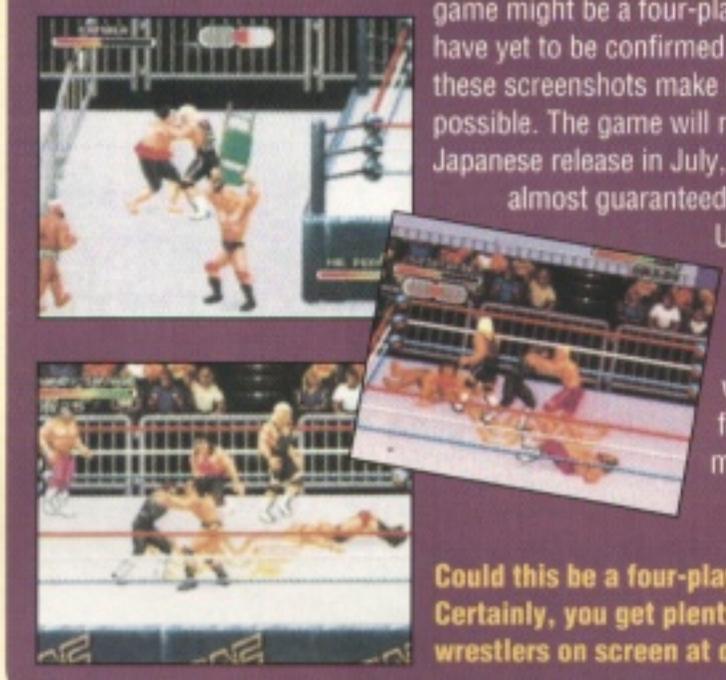
Here are the first pics of Irem's new – and *very* eagerly awaited – *R-Type III*. The game, which it now appears *isn't* based on the recent coin-op *R-Type Leo*, but is in fact a totally original new game developed for Super Famicom, is now nearing completion. It's nine stages long, and though the graphics have *R-Type* written all over them, the game tries out some new stuff – including inserting some vertically scrolling sections! Some new variations on the traditional *R-Type* weapons –

However, the game *does* feature plenty of new bits, including some great new weapons. Looks groovy, doesn't it?

WWF SUPER WRESTLEMANIA II

You can't deny it looks action packed, with plenty of moves.

One of the biggest Super Nintendo hits to date in the UK has been *WWF Super Wrestlemania*, which means (if the WWF craze hasn't well and truly died out by then) that there'll be an awful lot of people out there eager for the sequel. The good news is that a second game is now on the way – it features a number of popular WWF stars (each with his own special move), and single, tag match or 'battle royal' options. Rumours that the game might be a four-player one have yet to be confirmed, but these screenshots make it look possible. The game will receive a Japanese release in July, and is almost guaranteed an early UK release, too – we'll let you know when we find out more.



Could this be a four-player game? Certainly, you get plenty of wrestlers on screen at once!

SOCCER GOES TO SCHOOL

High School Soccer (Sunsoft)

While Coconuts and others enter the fast-becoming-crowded international soccer game market, Sunsoft return to school with *High School Soccer*, a 3D (ie *Kick Off* viewpoint) football game, based on – yes! – the under-16s game. Actually, this too has international leagues, a two-player mode and a system where the abilities of your team increase every time you win, so quite what the point of this 'high school' stuff is we don't know. Ho hum.

School-sized sprites look just the same as grown-ups to us!

SUPER F1 CIRCUS 2

by Nichibutsu (Nihon Bussan Co Ltd)

The look of *Super F1 Circus 2* is more like *Exhaust Heat* and so on, but with smaller sprites.

Remember this Lotus-sponsored overhead view racing game from our first issue? We rated it probably the best of its type so far, but had some doubts about the usefulness of the viewpoint in the first place – corners tend to leap out at you with little warning. Perhaps someone at Nihon Bussan felt the same way, because the sequel – which many people are eagerly awaiting in Japan – switches the viewpoint to a more *Exhaust Heat*-like 3D. Other differences include (of course) the fact that drivers and teams have been updated, and more weather effects are included. Look out for it – this could be a big one.

Gundam, eat your heart out! Tekkaman Blade is here!

(Bec)

Tekkaman Blade – the Japanese anime TV series featuring *Gundam*-like giant robots in a space setting – has a special appeal for us at *Super Play*. When we were planning the magazine, we used a picture of a Tekkaman robot on the mock cover we did to give people an idea of what *Super Play* would look like! Now there's a Super Famicom game based on *Tekkaman Blade* due soon, and we're pleased to welcome it – though uncertain about its quality. After all, Bec *were* responsible for the less than great *Super Bikuriman*... It's a sideways scrolling platform game which goes more beat-'em-uppy when bosses wander on screen.

Tekkaman Blade: Great looking robots, sure, but we've yet to be convinced by the rest of it!

SD Great Battle III

By Banpresto

Now here's a weird one – Super Deformed robots fighting in Medieval Europe! Following on from *SD Great Battle* and its original sequel, the rather mediocre *Last Fighter Twin, Great Battle III* is yet another one or two-player scrolling beat-'em-up featuring funny little squashed robots. This time, however, there's some strategy to the action too, as players enter shops to buy weapons and armour. The four selectable characters are:

Gundam F-91
The most famous Japanese robot of all uses swords and fire magic, and is said to be the ideal character for the beginner (ie he's of some use).

Ultraman The Great
Ultry, as he's called (*Are you sure? – Ed.*), uses a mace and earth magic.

RX Kamen 'The Masked Rider'
This beetle-head, '50s-style chara uses kicks and water magic.

Knight Loa
This Banpresto character has a bow and arrow and wind magic.

SD Great Battle III is out now in Japan, and if we can get Peter Evans (our guy over there) to send us a copy of the game in time, we'll run a review next issue.

Above: Oh no! It's a giant sock!
Below: Samurai Gundams, we love 'em.

SUPER TURRICAN

By Imagineer/Kemco

The famous home computer *Turrican* games have received a fair amount of criticism since top quality console platform games started to become popular in this country – and not undeservedly. The tightly organised structure of the best from Nintendo, Konami and Capcom threw into sharp relief the *Turrican* games' main problem – that their huge sprawling play areas tended to give the action a largely unfocussed feel. Apparently comments of this nature have not gone un-noted – though *Super Turrican* on the Super NES has been programmed by Factor 5, the same German team that created the originals, this time they're rumoured to have tightened everything up a bit. The good-looking graphics certainly haven't changed, however – *Super Turrican* was certainly one of the prettier games on display at January's Las Vegas CES, and one of the best sounding too (with impressive pounding soundtracks by top game musician Chris Huelsbeck, who wrote the original Amiga tunes). *Super Turrican* is still waiting for a UK release date to be confirmed, but it's due fairly soon in the States from Kemco Seika.

Above, top and right: Factor 5's souped-up Super NES version of the popular computer game *Turrican – Super Turrican*, in fact.

We don't usually review films in *Super Play*, and we don't mean to make a regular thing of it, but Jackie Chan's *City Hunter does* feature a massive *Street Fighter II* sequence (see news pages last issue), so we're making an exception. The film isn't yet on general release in the UK – indeed, it's not clear yet whether it ever will be – but Jim McLennan's seen it. Here's his report.

CITY HUNTER

Hong Kong (1993)
Director: Wong Ching
Stars: Jackie Chan, Joey Wang, Richard Norton

Normally action movies tend to spawn game spin-offs, but with *City Hunter* it's the other way round – *Street Fighter II* is such big news, the film features a lengthy dream sequence where our hero thinks he's actually inside an *SFII* coin-op, fighting real life representations of the game characters.

First, though, City Hunter himself. The film is (loosely) based on the Japanese comic and anime series of the same name. Our hero plays the sharp-shooting private eye Ryo Saeba – in the comics he's a notorious womaniser, but Jackie Chan's version loses about eight inches, most of the lechery, relocates the action from Tokyo to Hong Kong, and prefers to use his fists instead of a gun. The movie mainly takes place aboard a cruise liner which has been taken over by terrorists – it's *Under Siege* with a sense of humour. Jackie, aided by a few of the passengers, has to get rid of the bad guys, which he does in style.

Indeed, it's during one of the many fight sequences with the terrorists that the film's standout *SFII* sequence appears. Jackie's fighting a bad guy in the ship's video arcade, when he's thrown bodily into a *Street Fighter II* machine. Electricity sparks out, and does odd things to our hero's head – several optical effects later, our hero has turned into (a rather pint-sized version of) E Honda, with his opponent transformed into Ken!

We're treated to a swift blast through most of the *Street Fighter II* characters, climaxing with the bizarre sight of Jackie as Chun Li, complete with blue dress, spin-kick, pigtails and gleeful 'Ya-taa!' when (s)he finally gets rid of the bad guy. At this point someone unplugs the machine, and everything returns to normal.

For most *SFII* fans, of course, the film's worth seeing for this sequence alone, but the cartoon-like style of the rest of the film makes it a barrel of laughs from start to finish too. Jackie is, of course, notorious for loading his films with product placement, but they're normally done with such zest and style that you can't really complain. The *SFII* section is perhaps his funniest plug yet.

A fun movie, then, and well recommended, so it's a shame that it's unlikely to get a cinema release over here. But, it will almost certainly appear on video at some point, and would be well worth checking out then. It should certainly be enough to keep you going until the *Super Mario Bros* and proposed *Street Fighter II* movies themselves appear.

Top and above: *City Hunter.* Left: Jackie Chan as hero and ladies' man Ryo Saeba.

NINTENDO: JAPAN'S 'SECOND MOST LIKELY TO SUCCEED'

In a recent survey run by the Japanese business newspaper *The Nikkei Weekly*, some prominent Japanese were asked to nominate the country's top-rated companies – business people and non-corporate Japanese voting separately. There were no surprises in the top slot, as the great and the good in both categories voted electronics giant Sony into first place, as they have in similar surveys for the past three years. However, Nintendo caused the big shock of the survey – business people voted the company into second place (up one position), with the rest voting it third (up from thirteenth last year). Sega, too, did well (up to fifth from 43 in the business people's listing) – as far as the Japanese are concerned, the influence of video games in global terms is only just beginning.

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Answer:
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B) Horse
C) Hedgehog

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Answer: A) America B) Japan C) Australia

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In a shorter-than-usual Hell City, our man Peter Evans looks at some of the new games that're causing a stir in Japan at the moment, many of which will be appearing as grey imports soon, and a few of which are so obscure you'll never hear anything of them again...

LIVE FROM HELL CITY

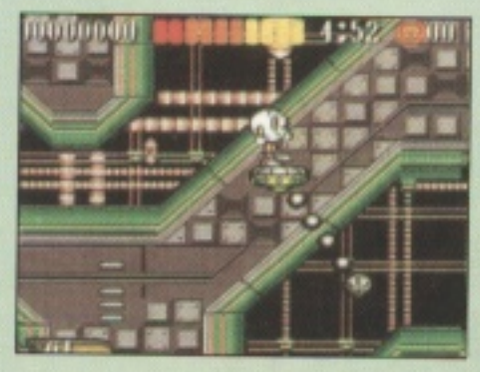
SUPER POWER LEAGUE
(Hudson Soft)

One of the best series of baseball games in Japan is Hudson's *Power League* series, which has appeared on both the Famicom and PC Engine in various versions. Their appeal lies in a clever blend of playability, oodles of options, and, of course, Hudson's usual skillful programming. This latest version, the first on Super Famicom, looks better than any of its predecessors, and will hopefully get a translation into English – after all, plenty of lesser baseball games have. It's due later in the year.

At last – an American-style baseball game that's good!

ACTION PACHIO
(Coconuts Japan)

See what we mean about Coconuts having a few new games out at the mo? This one's a platform thing, and one with emphasis on speed. You see, while the Super Nintendo has the best platform games on the planet – fact – that doesn't stop SNES creators every so often looking over to the rival Sega camp, seeing the speed of *Sonic*, and wishing they could do that on our machine. Hence this latest attempt at a SNES platformer 'with the speed of *Sonic*'. *Action Pachio* takes place on seven different planets, with some startling graphics, but I haven't played it enough to really judge its standard. Import copies should be arriving in the UK by the time you read this.



A *Sonic* contender in the speed stakes?

GP-1
(Atlus)

There's only been one bike game on the Super Famicom, and that was, er, *Street Fighter II* (with the bikes being of the pedal variety, of course). (*And in the background – Ed.*) Atlus have decided to address this problem, and currently have a split-screen two-player motorbike racing game on the go that looks quite smart. Mode 7 graphics and 13 tracks are promised. There's no release date yet, unfortunately.

Split-screen two-player biking action in Atlus' *GP-1*. Nice, eh?

Another Neo Geo beat-'em-up – *Sengoku*.

SENGOKU
(Data East)

It seems that Japanese developers have been fighting over the latest collection of Neo Geo licences to be dished out. First there was Takara, then KAC (*with* 2020 Super Baseball *reviewed this issue – Ed*), then Sunsoft who have *World Heroes* in the pipeline, and now Data East want a slice of the action, too. *Sengoku* was a popular beat-'em-up on the Neo Geo, and this 8 Mbit conversion looks like a fairly accurate translation, apart from the scaled down sprites. It's predictable stuff and I reckon it gets boring even quicker than most beat-'em-ups. Look out for this one later in the year.

SUPER BOMBERMAN
(Hudson Soft)

Super Bomberman has just recently hit the shops over here and, naturally, sales of Super Multitaps have rapidly increased, with many Japanese games players actually having waited for this game before splashing out on a multi-player accessory. It seems like a lot of people have *very* high hopes for *Super Bomberman* (after all, earlier versions of this game have all been great), and I'm under the strictest orders to get the *Super Play* team a copy on its day of release. That'll be at the end of April. (*So watch out for a full review of the game in our very next issue! – Ed.*)

Bombs away! This is the game that Super Multitap owners have been gagging for.

***Elnard* features these fight sequences, plus more *Zelda*-like walking bits.**

ELNARD
(Gameplan 21/Enix)

Another RPG. In this one you can choose to play one of seven different characters, but they're not all just dwarfs and elves this time – *Elnard* features demons, aliens and robots too. A neat crystal ball affair acts as your radar throughout the game, allowing you to work out the locations of monsters, towns, dungeons and the like. (You can easily work out safer routes to avoid all the action if you're low on Hit Points, for instance.) Gameplan 21 have developed *Elnard*, but it's been released through top role-playing game company Enix, and it is available now. (*Good news – this one's being re-titled* The 7th Saga *for an American release later in the year – Ed.*)

Weird aliens abound in *Cosmo Police*.

COSMO POLICE GALIVAN
(Nichibutsu, part of the Nihon Bussan Co Ltd)
You may have heard the name before – and no wonder. This is actually a remake of a game first released on the 8-bit Famicom (NES) back in '88. This new Super Nintendo version adds new aliens and bio knights, giving the player three characters to choose between before he goes on his mission. Out in June. (*And going by the screenshots, probably a very nob beat-'em-up – Ed.*)

SUPER AIR DIVER
(Asmik)
This is a high speed space shoot-'em-up, using a special DSP chip to get around slow-down. You get four fighters to choose between, a radar scanner to help you track down your opponents, and all the standard dogfight paraphernalia, including chaff, flares, guided missiles and so on. The game gives two mission options – air combat or ground attack – and oodles of missiles, including Sidewinders, Sparrows, Mavericks, Napalm bombs and all sorts. Expected in July.

Mode 7 landscapes make *Air Diver* look good.

RUN SABER
(Hori)
This platform game is very reminiscent of Capcom's *Strider*, but starring a heavily armoured battle cyborg. Though it's only five stages long, its two-player option allows for much in the way of frantic action. Our hero can slide, climb walls, and use a special move called 'Pheylon Thunder', shown in the pic. Good, eh? Also expected in July.

The moves may be *Strider*-esque, but the rural, mystical graphics certainly aren't.

BAZU MAGIC WORLD
(Hot B)
Yet another new RPG is *Bazu Magic World*, a swords-and-wizardry-type thing telling one huge story, but split into four parts. As is usual with these things, you have to meet characters along the way to form a decent fighting party. *Bazu Magic World* is currently scheduled for a June release.

Bazu looks unlikely for a UK release.

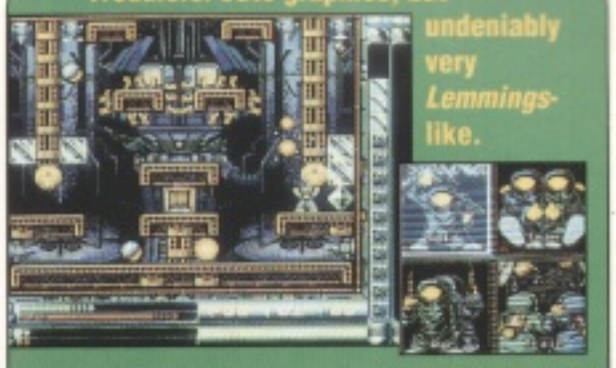
That's about it for now. Next issue, besides my usual stuff, I'll be airing my views in a new regular column all about RPGs. Look out for my verdicts of *Breath Of Fire* from Capcom, *Dorabotchan* ('Dracula Kid') from Naxat, and *Albert Odyssey* from Sunsoft, plus a new RPG from Konami. Soredewa, mata!

MAGIC JOHNSON'S SUPER SLAM DUNK
(Virgin)

It's taken a while for American basketball legend Magic Johnson to sponsor a game, but the inevitable has eventually happened. This apparently plays a bit like a basketball version of *Joe Montana* (the Mega Drive American football game), with Magic himself giving you tips on how to play, and guiding you through your quest to win the national championships. Jeremy Bridgeman, *Super Play*'s resident basketball expert, is just quivering with excitement at the thought, so no doubt we'll have a big review of the game in a forthcoming issue.

Now hoop fans get *another* way to play!

Troddlers: **Cute graphics, but undeniably very *Lemmings*-like.**



GRAVITY-FREE LEMMINGS? NO, THEY'RE TRODDLERS
(Storm)

Somehow we've managed to let any mention of *Troddlers* slip through our fingers in previous issues, so to make up for it here are a couple of pictures. It's a (whisper it) *Lemmings*-inspired thing, with cute magician creatures who you've got to rescue from increasingly complex levels (there are 175 of them) – the big difference from *Lemmings* being that the levels are entirely gravity-free, so the Troddlers can wander up the walls and things. Actually, it's probably more similar to *Solomon's Club* on the Game Boy (or, indeed, the earlier computer game *Solomon's Key*) if you're being picky. The game will be out in the UK in mid July.

'HEY, I'M JUST THE COOK'
STEVEN SEAGAL ARRIVES ON SUPER NINTENDO!

In what is apparently 'the first ever licensing of a real-life person, rather than a film or character', new-to-the-SNES US publishers TecMagik have signed up 'top' movie star Steven Seagal for a series of games that'll stretch over several years. But, due to the nature of the licence, we won't be seeing a playable version of *Under Siege*, one of *Super Play*'s fave films so far this year. Instead, the first of TecMagik's games will be set in 2194 (though released in early 1994), with Mr Seagal marching around platform-filled levels, beating up baddies under some hastily-constructed premise. All we've seen so far is the main sprite, kicking and punching thin air. It looks, erm, a bit like Steven Seagal.

Also coming up from TecMagik is a game based on the *Pink Panther* – inevitably, perhaps, a platform game. It looks sort of alrightish, and boasts a triffic version of the *Pink Panther* theme tune. (Incidentally, it says here that there's a new *Pink Panther* film coming out this year. It won't, presumably, have Peter Sellars in it.)

IT'S... THE SUPER QUIZ!

So what's so Super about it then, eh? Well, it's based around a slightly crap 'game' analogy, in that there are three difficulty settings (if you will). If you can answer all the questions on the Easy level, then try the Normal level, and so on. And if you get all the way through the Hard setting, have a crack at the (oh dear) End-of-Quiz Boss.

EASY
1) What was the very first game reviewed in *Super Play*?
2) Where is America's Summer CES held?
3) What was the first Super Nintendo game to use a DSP chip?

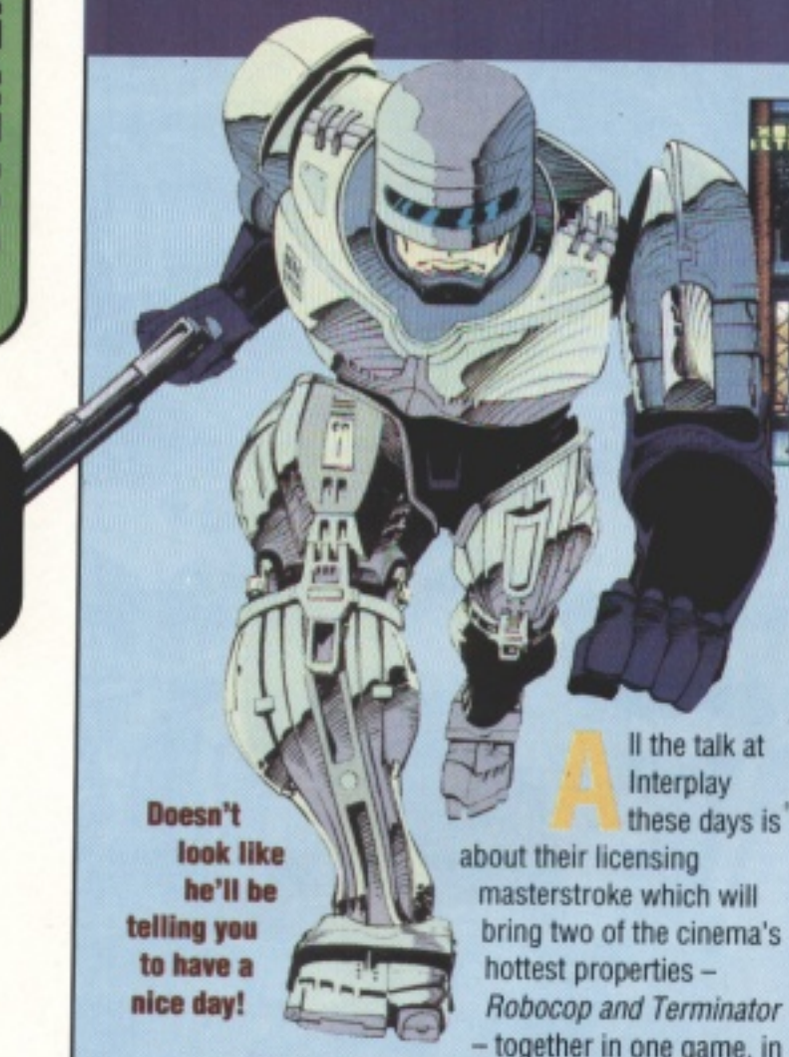
NORMAL
4) What publisher is bringing *Mortal Kombat* to the SNES?
5) In what game did Vic Viper first appear?
6) What company is said to be currently working on a 32 Mbit SNES beat-'em-up?

HARD
7) What US comics publisher is to bring out a *Street Fighter II* comic?
8) How many *SFII* carts do Capcom expect to sell in the US in 1993?
9) Name the character designer for the *Dragon Quest* series.

END-OF-QUIZ BOSS
10) Here we go... take the bit size of the Super NES CD's RISC chip, multiply it by the date of the month this mag hit the newsagent's, take away from that the number of pages in the *Game Player's Encyclopedia Of Nintendo Games (Volume 6)*, multiply that by the number of the latest *Final Fantasy* game, add the cart ROM of *North Star Ken 6*, add the highest score we've ever given a game, take away the number that relates to the letter of the alphabet that forms the last word of the game reviewed on page 57 this issue, add to this the weight of Slippy Toad (in kg), discover the location of the software house that released the game advertised on this page of *Super Play* 3, then name the *Super Play* reviewer born in this town, tell us his/her favourite airline, tell us the capital city of the country it's based in, take the first two letters of it, double them, and you're almost there. Now name the creature the resulting character is. As your final answer we'll take any game 'related to' this word. Done that? Now flick to the back of the mag to see if you got it right!

ROBOCOP VERSUS TERMINATOR

(Interplay)



Doesn't look like he'll be telling you to have a nice day!

All the talk at Interplay these days is about their licensing masterstroke which will bring two of the cinema's hottest properties – *Robocop and Terminator* – together in one game, in much the same way as IGS united *Alien* and *Predator* (only much, much better, hopefully). The game will be a platform-based shoot-'em-up, with the two heroes battling it out over several futuristic-looking levels, and will be released in around October.

But Interplay haven't just plucked the two characters out of the air willy-nilly. There's actually an excellent *Robocop versus Terminator* comic, scripted by top comics person Frank Miller (also responsible for *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* and the film scripts of *Robocops 2* and *3*). Matt Bielby, *Super Play*'s comic bore, claims it's 'one of my very favourites'.

The 1993 National Paint-Stripping Championship finalists show their mettle.

'It's very fast and very violent,' explains Matt Bielby, comic buff, of the original strip.

● Also on the way from Interplay is *Rock 'n Roll Racing*, a 3D overhead-view truck-racing game which was first seen at the Las Vegas CES earlier this year. The interesting thing about this futuristic *Super Off Road* lookalike is that Interplay have the licence to use tunes like Black Sabbath's *Paranoid* and Steppenwolf's *Born To Be Wild* on the soundtrack!

LORD OF THE RINGS

(Interplay)

Gandalf tries his magic on a Balrog in Interplay's *Lord Of The Rings*.

If anyone sits down and starts singing about gold, shoot them.

One fantasy/RPG-type game that's worth looking forward to and is due for a release later this year is *Lord Of The Rings* – and not just because it's based on the book which single-handedly begun the whole fantasy bonanza. The really exciting thing about it should be the graphics, which use 'Rotoscoping' – the technique that made *Another World* look so impressive – to give the game a cartoony, cinematic feel. And it'll have fight sequences that work in real-time, rather than the more normal 'The monster strikes out at you but misses/What do you want to do next?' type of thing. It won't neglect its RPG roots, though – you'll have a party of characters to guide around the place, all with their own attributes and abilities. Oh, and it'll work with the mouse, which should make things easier.

SO, WHICH ONE *WAS* THE APRIL FOOL?

As many of you seem to have realised, last month's issue hit the shops on 1 April – ideal timing for an April Fool from us. Some people thought the 'Games From Outer Space' story (page 13) was one. Not so – there really *are* plans to beam game down from satellite onto special receivers in Japanese homes. The *SFII* story (page 10) is totally genuine, too. No, the *real* April Fool was the Chun Li lookalike competition. As far as we know, contests of this type have never been held in Japan or the States, and certainly not on so large a scale for cars to be included among the prizes! (This all said, however, we've had a lot of interest in the idea!)

SUPER WIDGET

(Atlus)

Pint-sized alien cartoon hero Widget is to appear in his own game – an 8 Mbit action thing with some very sweet cartoony graphics. You may never have heard of him, but his animated adventures attract a daily audience of six million, so the it's guaranteed success in the US at least. Expect to see the game on import soon.

Widget is given the task of saving the world from a 'growing evil'.

BATTLETOADS IN 'BATTLEMANICS'

(Tradewest)

One of the more exciting NES releases recently (okay, *the* exciting release) was *Battletoads*. It stars three toads called Zitz, Rash and Pimple, and mixes up beat-'em-up gameplay with platform sections, scrolling surfing bits and just about every other style going, and lets two people play at once. It went down a storm. The Mega Drive version had a more subdued reception, however, making few improvements over the NES original.

But the Super NES version, currently under development by Rare (better known to computer game-players of old as Ultimate Play The Game), and due for release in September, is being rewritten from scratch, taking full advantage of the SNES's bits and pieces. The graphics look marvellous.

The warthog never suspected what lurked in his deluxe raspberry, chocolate and nut sundae.

PLOK (Tradewest)

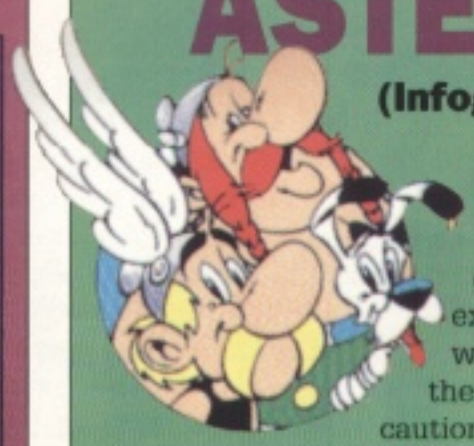
Here's, er, Plok. Say hello.

Followers of Software Creations (the people behind *Super Off Road*, *Spiderman & The X-Men*, and *Solstice II*, and who we interviewed in issue 1) will want to circle September on their calendars – that's when *Plok* is due for release. It's a sort of platform game-type thing, starring Plok as the King of Akrillic (which we think refers to his jurisdiction rather than his wardrobe). He's waging war against the Fleas, who've stolen his favourite flag (it says here) The graphics look slick and colourful, but that's about all we know for now.

The wind changed and that was that.

Here's Plok again. Only a bit smaller.

BY JUPITER! IT'S... ASTERIX (Infogrames)



French publishers Infogrames are getting terribly excited about *Asterix*, which they've claimed the licence to. Throwing caution to the wind they've opted to write a platform game, which looks pretty and features all the things you'd normally expect to find in a platform game, along with all your favourite Gauls. Fact-fans might like to know that there are 24 *Asterix* books, which have sold over 200 million copies worldwide. And there's an *Asterix* theme park north of Paris which was visited by 1,350,000 people in its first year. Plaonng! (*Eh? – Ed.*)

Asterix discovers a natural source of Superglue – the hard way.

'Okay, so I haven't got the nicest ankles in the world. But there's no need for that.'

LATEST 16 MBIT BEAT-'EM-UP CONTENDER

ART OF FIGHTING (K Amusements)

You may remember this from the Neo Geo – yet another *SFII* lookalike , but with even bigger sprites. Others of you may have seen *Super Play* Eye Catch last month, when we ran a first screenshot. Now, however, we've got better pictures of the thing, so here it is – the latest big name beat-'em-up for the SNES. This 16 Mbit release, which features an interesting 'zoom in, zoom out' on the action option, is said by the Japanese to be 'the nearest thing to watching a martial arts movie' yet.

DOES ADVERTISING HAVE A PLACE IN GAMES?

Have you seen *Super James Pond* (née *Robocod*)? Then you may remember the Penguin chocolate bars level, packed with the famous sweets. Equally, you may have seen Chupa Chups lollies appearing in Gremlin's famous Amiga platformer *Zool*. Or Quavers promoting the home computer versions of Ocean's *Pushover*.

All are examples of the sponsorship or 'product placement' we've seen on TV and movies over recent years – sponsorship like Beamish stout paying for part of *Inspector Morse*, or product placement like the movie *Mac & Me*, which heavily promoted MacDonalds. Well, now – as the games above prove – it's happening on Super Nintendo too.

A company called Microtime Media is currently arranging packages for large companies to promote their products through games. You can have your product name appear inside the program (say on a billboard around a racing track, or on the side of one of the cars) or you can have a dedicated world created for your product within the game. You can even have your brand's character (say Colin Curley in *Pushover*) play a starring role in the game. (Interestingly, it costs more to have your company inserted into a shoot-'em-up or platform game than an RPG, according to Microtime's quoted rates, with a puzzle game the most expensive of all.)

So what's the upside for the games player? According to Microtime, games benefit from the added sense of realism real-life products bring to things, while (in the long-term) these sorts of sponsorship deals could actually help bring the price of the finished games down, 'something everybody wants.' One thing seems clear – we're going to see more 'real-life' company sponsorship deals appear in our games over the years to come.

● Do you think it's a good thing when you see a real-life product advertised in a game? Or does it annoy you or get on your nerves? If you've strong feelings on this, write to us at Play Back, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and we'll print the most interesting letters.

Microtime is a 'lifestyle medium in the mass market', it says here, offering 'a new dimension in advertising' which 'satisfies the most discerning of creative eyes'. Who could possibly resist?

REASONS TO BUY A SUPER MULTITAP (PART THREE)

Still not convinced that Hudson's four-player adaptor is one of *the* essential Super Nintendo add-ons? Then let these new Super Multitap releases go some way towards convincing you...

The Super Multitap – expect to see importers bringing it over in larger numbers soon.

Super Family Tennis

(Namco)

The players are cute and, best of all, they can still dive for shots.

First of all there was *Jimmy Connors Pro Tennis Tour* (reviewed in issue 5 alongside Hudson Soft's Super Multitap, and almost reason enough in itself to get one of these multi-player adaptors). Then, in issue 6, we brought you news of Hudson's first game to use the adaptor – *Super Bomberman*. Now, there are two more Multitap-compatible games in the pipeline – this one from Namco and *Super Formation Soccer 2* from Human (below). If you aren't convinced yet, you never will be.

Of course, Namco's plans to release a four-player tennis game shouldn't come as a surprise to owners of the PC Engine console. After all, one of the company's best ever releases was the four-player *World Court Tennis* – an Engine game that's been out for almost five years, but still manages to keep up with SNES games like *Super Tennis* and *Jimmy Connors* in two-player mode, and beats them all hollow with four. (It also included a strange wander-around-the-place-and-challenge-players RPG type of thing, but the less said about that the better.) With such a track record behind them, interest in this new release is high – could Namco, as many people suspect, be about to release the best Super NES sports game yet? Unfortunately the company is keeping tight-lipped on details at the moment, so it's kind of hard to say – we'll bring you more info soon.

Left: As in the original, there are different courts to choose from. Far left: Taking a volley at the net.

Super Formation Soccer 2

(Human)

The first *Super Formation Soccer* appeared on the Super Famicom in December '91, but was renamed *Super Soccer* to coincide with the official release of the UK Super Nintendo. This game, then, is really *Super Soccer 2* as far as most UK gameplayers are concerned, and may possibly appear in the UK under that name sometime in the future – probably shortly after the UK release of the Super Multitap (whenever that makes it over here). Yes, this sequel has the massive advantage in that four players can take to the field simultaneously, just like in the first version of *Formation Soccer* that originally appeared on the PC Engine.

Four player games should be an absolute scream. Each player has his own name at his feet – let's hope for an English text version!

Other new features include a move that can keep the ball from being frequently lost to sliding tackles – a common problem with the original *Super Soccer*. Another advantage is that players can actually be named individually so that on-screen confusion as far as who's who is concerned is minimised. Of course, in this version there are over 200 Japanese characters, but the planned inclusion of the English alphabet in the new game should make naming your character that much easier for Westerners.

Left: It's the yellow card! Four-player matches should be packed with these. Below: A missed penalty!

As already mentioned, *Super Formation Soccer 2* is currently a Japanese release only. But anyone who's planning to buy the imported cart in June will be reassured to learn that the Super Multitap seems to work fine on the UK machine with all the compatible games we've tried so far. This one should be worth the wait.

MERCHANDISE OF THE MONTH

MARIO KART KARTS!

If only Matchbox made them like this...

Like *Mario Kart*? Of course you do. Then you'll like the look of these latest *Mario*-related toys – small, well made plastic models of all your favourites from *Super Mario Kart*. There's Mario (of course), Luigi, Yoshi, Koopa, Donkey Kong and Toad – dunno what's happened to Bowser and Princess Daisy, though. There's not much more to say about these really – they're neat, and we wish we had a set, but as you can only buy them in Japan, it looks like we're not going to.

GAME 'LOOK & FEEL'

Is there a case?

Remember how many *Lemmings* lookalikes we've seen since the game first appeared two-and-a-half years ago? Ever thought such lookalikes were 'a bit cheeky' – or even shouldn't be allowed? Until recently, you couldn't have done much about it – unless a copycat game directly ripped off your game code, the legal case you had against them would look very weak indeed.

Now, however, this might have changed. Ever since a company called John Richardson Computers (who make programs for the pharmaceutical market) won a case against rival products that were using their 'look and feel' recently, a legal precedent has been set – now cases taken against games that copy someone else's original idea are more likely to succeed. Psygnosis, amongst others, are probably *very* happy indeed...

IT'LL BE THE SHOW OF THE YEAR!

Future Entertainment Show and GamesMaster Live! combine

Remember the tail end of last year, with two giant game shows competing for your attention? It was great for showgoers (sort of), but less than ideal for the software houses and other exhibitors – they found that their attention and resources were split between the two. Good news, then, that this year *GamesMaster* TV show producers Hewland International and Future Publishing (the people behind *Super Play* and *GamesMaster* magazine) have joined forces to produce a single show to beat them all. This year's Future Entertainment Show will be held at London's Olympia venue (much larger than Earls Court, which should help out with the overcrowding problems) on 11-14 November 1993, and will have as its centrepiece a large *GamesMaster* Live! 'happening' on stage. This year's FES should have more floor area, more exhibitors and (even) more visitors – Nintendo has already agreed to take a large stand, with most of the major games publishers expected to make a showing too. We'll have more details over the coming months – this is one date you can't afford to miss.

Top and above: Ocean's stand, and hosting the National Computer Games Championship finals, at the FES 1992.

Sumo wrestling at the US Gold stand at GamesMaster Live!

Starfox gets UK release, cheap price – and a new name?

***Starfox* – Nintendo's biggest game of the year so far, made possible by the great Super FX chip – goes on UK release on 29 May, at a price that's rumoured to be under £40. Great news, but slightly odd is that fact that it won't actually be known as *Starfox* in this country at all, but *Starwing*. Apparently this is to avoid confusion with ancient 8-bit Ariolasoft releases *Starfox* and *Starfox 2*, 3D wireframe *Battle Zone*-lookalikes that appeared on C64 and Spectrum in around 1986. As both games and software house are long since forgotten, it seems unlikely there was any danger of a law-suit there, but litigation conscious Nintendo seem unwilling to take the risk anyway. Hence the name change, which will affect all European copies, while the *Starfox* moniker will continue in the States and Japan.**

Prepare for the 3D space adventure of your lives – *Starwing*.

SUPER PLAY'S HOT LIST

This is the bit where we remind you of the best games we've reviewed in recent months, lest their memory fade.

THE ADDAMS FAMILY IN: PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT

(Ocean)
The first *Addams Family* game was really good. And the sequel is at least twice as impressive. The graphics are amazing – really cartoony, with some great backgrounds, and loads of stuff that you won't have seen anywhere before. It's difficult, too, so don't expect to finish it for ages.

STARFOX

(Nintendo)
Fast, 3D graphics; massive explosions; great sound effects; a Super FX chip; plenty of challenge (on the toughest level) – *Starfox* has got everything going for it. It's *the* game to make you glad you bought a SNES. (It's a bit expensive on import, though, so more prudent readers might want to wait for the official release.)

BATMAN RETURNS

(Konami)
If you liked *Final Fight* or *Rival Turf*, you'll love *Batman Returns* – it's better than both of them put together. By some incredible feat of brilliance it manages to be both close to the original film *and* a top-notch scrolling beat-'em-up, with some great graphics, and good music too. It won't take all that long to play through, though.

KIKIKAIKAI

(Natsume)
Yup, here it is again. An extremely funny little shoot-'em-up with some of the most polished, enjoyable and ruddy difficult two-player action around. Fortunately, we discovered a cheat (see Mode 7) and those later levels are even better than the first ones, featuring some of the best graphics around. Fabulous stuff.

SUPER SMASH TV

(Acclaim)
Certain people felt we'd short-changed *Super Smash TV* by giving it a tiny review in issue 1, 'only' awarding it 84% and never mentioning it again. Not so! And to prove it, we'd heartily recommend it, a shoot-'em-up in its purest, most violent form, though it can get a wee bit repetitive. (*Hang on! Shouldn't these be the best games from the last month or so? – Ed.*)

ANIME WORLD

Pronounced 'ah-nee-may'

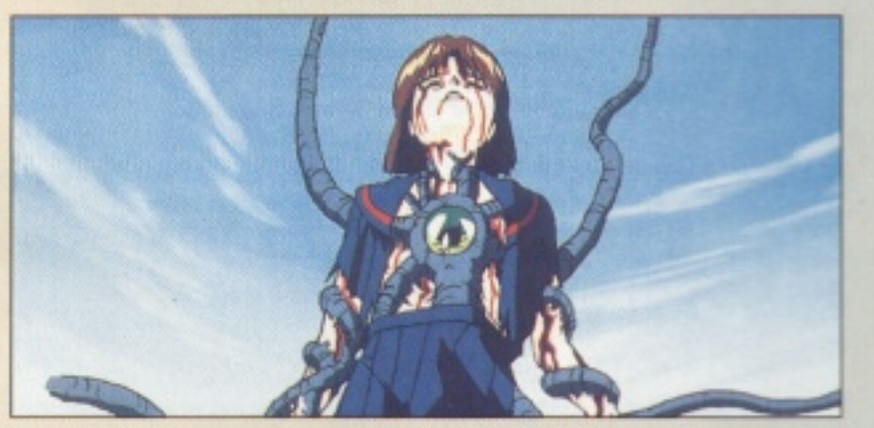
THE NEXT RELEASES: REVEALED!

This month, Helen McCarthy looks at *Lensman*, *Vampire Hunter D* and *Cyber City Oedo 808* – three anime videos due for release over the next few months.

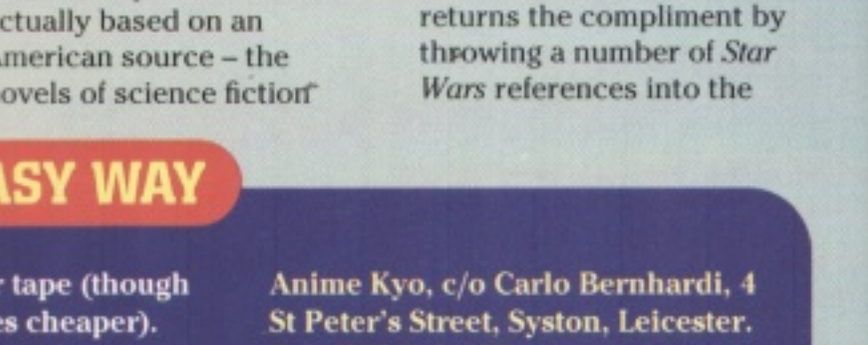
Last issue we looked at *3x3 Eyes* – Manga Video's latest release – and promised to follow up with previews of the next batch of films they're planning to bring out. Bear in mind, though, that nothing is written in stone at this point. Firstly, it's not always possible to predict what the British Board Of Film Censors – who have to approve every film or video released in the UK – will do to a film. For instance, *3x3 Eyes* was confidently expected by those familiar with the story to earn a PG, but no – the BBFC decided it warranted an 18 certificate instead. They move in mysterious ways...

Secondly, dubbing is very often not completed until shortly before release, meaning it's hard for us to judge at this point whether it'll be any good. Bad dubbing can ruin the atmosphere or sense of a film, so this can be far more important than you might think.

These things said, then, here are my views on some anime videos due for release in the next few months.



3x3 Eyes: This is one of the bits that must have earned it an 18 certificate – it's towards the end of the film, where this tree thing sort of, erm, grows up inside this girl and, well... it all gets a bit messy really.



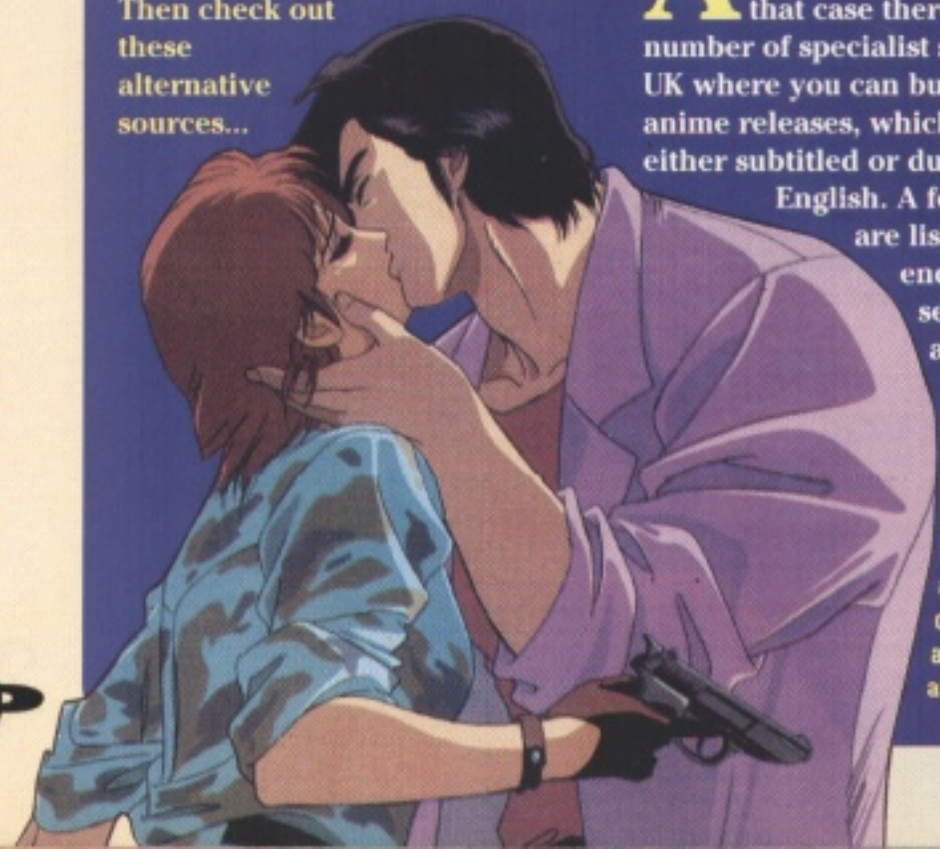
'It was that big!' Pai, the heroine of *3x3 Eyes*, shows where the series got its name – when things get hot, a third eye appears in her forehead, her magic surges, and all hell breaks loose.

LENSMAN

If the name *Lensman* is familiar to you it's because, yes, this Japanese video is actually based on an American source – the novels of science fiction writer EE 'Doc' Smith, and, in particular, his novel *Galactic Patrol*, the third in his *Lensman* series. These books are said to have been one of the many influences on *Star Wars*, and here Japanese director Kawajiri returns the compliment by throwing a number of *Star Wars* references into the

GETTING HOLD OF ANIME: THE EASY WAY

Need more of an anime fix than the Manga Video releases alone? Then check out these alternative sources...



Wa-hey! *City Hunter* (the original, not the new Jackie Chan film) gets slushy-again! Sadly the only copies available in Britain are in Cantonese!

Anyone out there got an NTSC video recorder? In that case there are a number of specialist shops in the UK where you can buy American anime releases, which will be either subtitled or dubbed into English. A few addresses are listed at the end of this section, but assume around $21.99 per tape (though they are sometimes cheaper).

If you – like most of us – are restricted to PAL equipment, and don't mind just looking at the pictures, the Chinese community in many big cities will probably carry assorted anime tapes in their video shops. A company called China Video does videos of series like *City Hunter*, *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Cat's Eye* and more, dubbed into Cantonese. They cost about $18.

You could also try joining the UK's only anime club run by fans for fans, Anime Kyo. Write to them with a stamped addressed envelope for a reply. Or come along to the next UK anime convention, to be held in Birmingham in October. We'd love to see you.

Anime Kyo, c/o Carlo Bernhardi, 4 St Peter's Street, Syston, Leicester. Tel: (0664) 64488.

conTanimeTed (the fifth annual British anime convention), c/o JJ Green, 9 Edmund Street, Swindon SN1 3JE.

And some shops that you can buy US anime videos from:

Sheffield Space Centre, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HS. Tel: (0742) 758905. (A mail order service is also available.).
Forbidden Planet, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1D6. Tel: (071) 379 6042.
Top Ten Soho, St Anne's Court, London W1. Tel: (071) 734 7388.

film. It was actually produced back in 1984, using (then) state-of-the-art computer animation techniques – parts of the movie were constructed using Cray-1 super computers, mixed in with the hand-drawn cels.

The story tells of young Kimball Kinnison, who leaves his family farm on a remote planet (sound familiar?) to discover adventures beyond his dreams. Colourful characters – including the attractive and terrifyingly competent nursing officer Clarissa (who prefers, quite understandably, to be called Chris) and DJ Bill, the oldest, craziest swinger in the galaxy – coupled with good animation, a fast moving plot and some suitably weird and gelatinous baddies, makes for an entertaining romp. I like this, and recommend it as a good buy.

VAMPIRE HUNTER D

Vampire Hunter D is a classic tale of a lone hero who comes to the aid of a bunch of country folk in their fight against the local vampire (cheekily dubbed 'Count Lee') – it's like the old movie *Captain Cronos Vampire Hunter*, but in anime style. Heroine Doris isn't really in the Caroline Munro mould – she's more like Polyanna – but it's a good story, and the chara designs (by top designer Yoshitaku Amano) have been much admired in Japan and America since the film's original 1985 release. The twist in the tale is that 'D' is actually half-vampire himself – the son of Dracula, no less. Though the film has no cyberpunk elements, no battlesuited babes and no fast-paced edits – just a good story with some shiver-inducing moments – it's well worth trying. Anime as the old House Of Hammer might have made it.

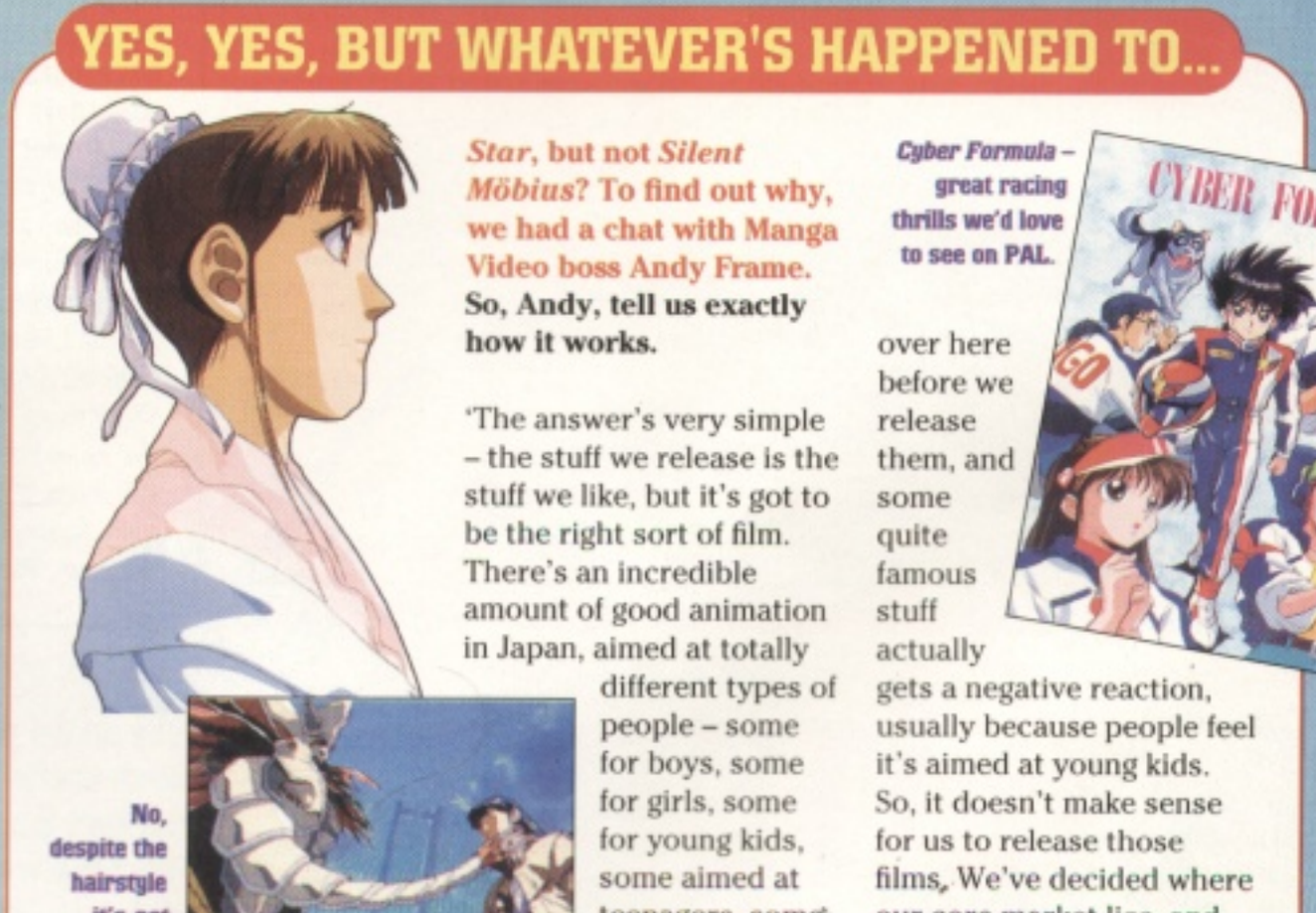
Gorgeous horror graphics abound in *Vamp Hunter D*. You wouldn't want to meet this lot on a dark night.

CYBER CITY OEDO 808

Cyber City Oedo 808, however, is a film *everyone* will love. Sleek, dark and threatening, with a good story, strong charas and a chilling ending, it's one to put on your must-buy list. The story centres around an undead computer hacker. Our hero, one of a group of three criminals with Most Wanted status, who've been pulled from prison to create a special unit within the city of Oedo's police force, has his work cut out trying to end the film in one piece (and with his carefully cultivated quiff still in place). This may not appear until the end of the Summer – or even later – but is well worth waiting for.

ANIME CONTACTS

Anime UK magazine, 70 Mortimer St, London W1. (£3.50 from good SF/comic shops, or mail order from publishers + 70p p&p.)
The Manga Club, Island World Communications, 40 St Peter's Rd, London W6 9BD.



One of the best-looking animated films ever is *Lensman*, a *Star Wars*-like intergalactic adventure on an epic scale.

YES, YES, BUT WHATEVER'S HAPPENED TO...

No, despite the hairstyle it's *not* Chun Li, but the heroine of the great *Silent Möbius*, a sort of Japanese *UFO* (of sorts).

Star, but not _Silent Möbius_? To find out why, we had a chat with Manga Video boss Andy Frame. So, Andy, tell us exactly how it works.

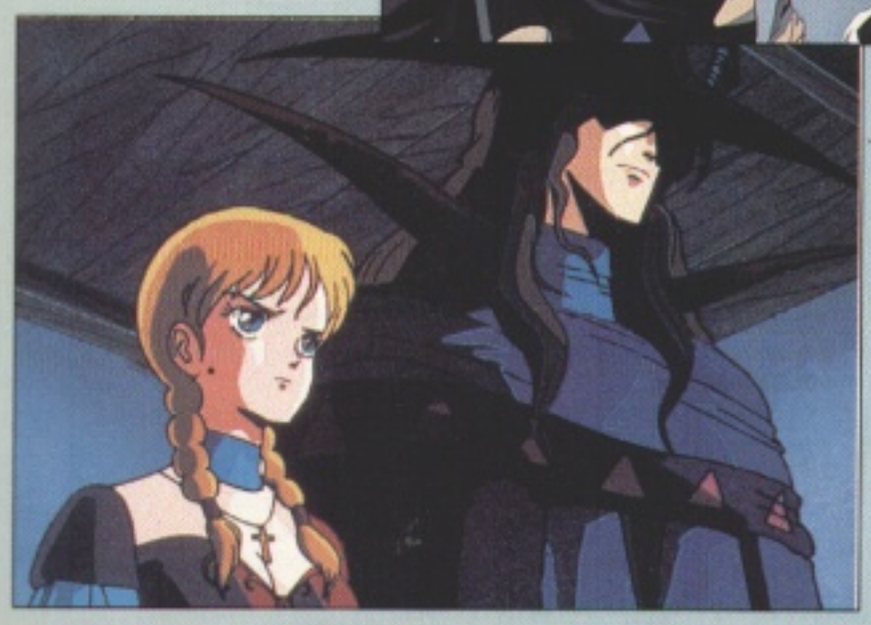
'The answer's very simple – the stuff we release is the stuff we like, but it's got to be the right sort of film. There's an incredible amount of good animation in Japan, aimed at totally different types of people – some for boys, some for girls, some for young kids, some aimed at teenagers, some for people in their 20s and so on. Our market in the UK, however, is nearly all males between 16 and 25, so we need to release stuff that will appeal to them – films with good animation, strong stories and characters, and lots of action. We do test screenings to see how films go down over here before we release them, and some quite famous stuff actually gets a negative reaction, usually because people feel it's aimed at young kids. So, it doesn't make sense for us to release those films. We've decided where our core market lies, and we're sticking with that for the time being.'

Cyber Formula – great racing thrills we'd love to see on PAL.

You may be wondering why certain Japanese animation videos get released in English, and why others don't – especially since the ones we see aren't always the biggest hits in Japan itself. Why, for instance, do we get to see decent (but fairly average) space stuff like *Odin*, when there's the much-more-popular *Macross*, *Gundam* and so on out there too? Why do we get the cute *Project A-Ko*, but not the even cuter (and *massive* in Japan) *Porco Rosso*? Why *Fist Of The North*

Porco Rosso and ultra-cute chum appear in one of our all-time fave anime's ever.

Vampire Hunter D features a hero who's half-vampire...



...and half vampire-hunter. This obviously causes a few moral conundrums for the poor chap. His pop certainly wouldn't approve of his chosen profession...

STRIKER
(Elite)

It looks like being a good year for footy on the Super Nintendo – just as well, as the SNES still doesn't really boast a definitive football game. As well as *Super Formation Soccer 2* and *World Soccer* (previewed elsewhere on these pages), and, of course, *Sensible Soccer* (which we still don't have any pictures of, but we now know is being released by Sony), we can look forward to *Striker* from Elite. *Striker* was well-reviewed in its Amiga incarnation, but it was generally felt that it played second fiddle to *Sensible Soccer*, largely because it didn't have much in the way of front-end options.

Well, Elite have paid heed to their critics in translating the game to the SNES, giving it a host of options that let you customise your teams in almost every conceivable way, and they've even slipped in a six-a-side indoor option. All the players have individual abilities, there are instant action-replays after goals, you can design your team's strip – it's all in there, basically. We've tested an almost-finished version and it played really well, with smooth scrolling and instinctive controls. Obviously we'll reserve judgement till we review the full version soon.

Top: You can even choose the colour of your team members' hair! Right: It's looking like *Striker* may be a winner.

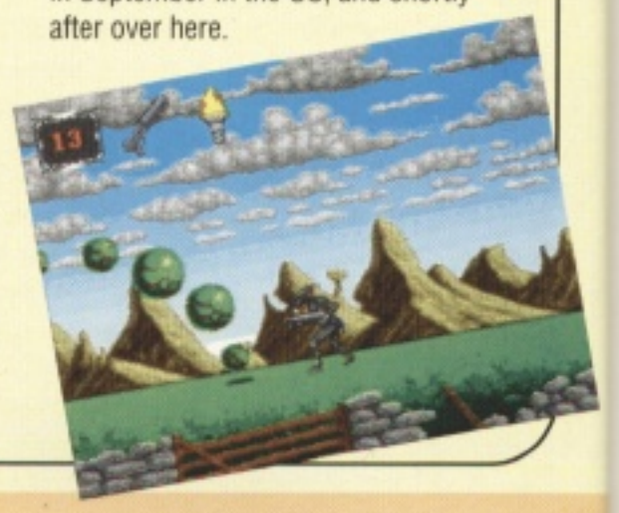
Might And Magic II
(Elite)

August will see the release of *Might And Magic II*, a terrifying fantasy role-playing game which even Elite admit will be something of a specialised taste. It'll have 16,000 locations, 250 monsters, 96 magic spells, 3D graphics and auto-mapping. And even before we've seen that, *Might And Magic III* has been pencilled in for November.

A Blood Sucker and a Spooky – just two of the 250 monsters you have to do battle with.

The Beast is back!
Super Shadow Of The Beast
(IGS)

Psygnosis' good-looking *Shadow Of The Beast* shifted more Amigas than just about anything else, back in the heady days of ST and Amiga rivalry. Now it's set to appear on the SNES later this year, though whether it'll be quite such a standout game on our system remains to be seen. Programmed in-house by Psygnosis, the top Liverpool soft co behind the original, *Super* (yawn) *Shadow Of The Beast* looks... well, just like it always did, to be honest, with smart parallax and loads of colours. It even sounds remarkably close to the Amiga original. However, things have changed a lot in the gameplay department (enough to fox even players of the original, we're told), because now there's a decent set of puzzles in there too. Expect the game in September in the US, and shortly after over here.



DATEBOOK

Lots of exciting release dates from around the world!

Why do we print it so small? Simply because Datebook contains so much useful information about worldwide release dates that we couldn't possibly fit it all in otherwise. You know you love it. Plus! This time we've got three whole months of release dates for you to squint at, including some corkingly dubious translations.

MONTH	DATE	GAME TITLE	GAME TYPE	PUBLISHER	COUNTRY
May	14	Bar Code Battler	strategy	Epoch	Jap
May	14	Goliath	strategy	BBS	Jap
May	21	NBA All-Star Challenge	sports	Acclaim Japan	Jap
May	28	Pachinko	arcade	KSS	Jap
May	28	Shogi	board game	Seta	Jap
May	29	Starwing	shoot-'em-up	Nintendo	UK
May	late	Super Chinese World 2	RPG	Culture Brain	Jap
May	late	Super Slap Shot	sports	Altron	Jap
May	–	Septentrion	action	Human	Jap
May	–	Final Fight II	beat-'em-up	Capcom	Jap
May	–	Terminator	shoot-'em-up	Mindscape	UK
May	–	Warpspeed	shoot-'em-up	Accolade	UK
May	–	Syvalion	shoot-'em-up	JVC	US
May	–	Batman Returns	beat-'em-up	Konami	US
June	4	Dragon Slayer	RPG	Epoch	Jap
June	25	Alien³	shoot-'em-up	Acclaim	Jap
June	25	Sangokushi Spirits	strategy	Wolf Team	Jap
June	25	Estpolis	RPG	Taito	Jap
June	mid	First Samurai	platform	Kemco	Jap
June	mid	Odysselya	RPG	Vic Tokai	Jap
June	late	The Art Of Fighting	beat-'em-up	Culture Brain	Jap
June	late	Super Widget	platform	Atlus	Jap
June	late	Dragon's Magic	action	Konami	Jap
June	late	Putty Moon	–	Varie	Jap
June	–	Silver Saga 2	RPG	Seta	Jap
June	–	Cosmo Police Galivan	beat-'em-up	Nihon	Jap
June	–	Wing Commander	shoot-'em-up	Ascii	Jap
June	–	Super Formation Soccer 2	sports	Human	Jap
June	–	Bazu Magic World	RPG	Hot B	Jap
June	–	Tom And Jerry	platform	Altron	Jap
June	–	Battle Mobile	racing	System Sacom	Jap
June	–	Rocky Rodent	platform	Irem	US
June	–	Troddlers	puzzle	Seika	US
July	8	Run Sabre	platform	Hori	Jap
July	23	Magic Johnson's Super Slam Dunk	sports	Virgin	Jap
July	early	Solstice 2	platform	Epic	Jap
July	early	Japanese Pro Wrestling	sports	NCS	Jap
July	early	World Soccer	sports	Coconuts	Jap
July	mid	Super Horse Racing	sports	Actallion	Jap
July	late	Debustitar	–	Micro	Jap
July	–	Super Back To The Future 2	action	EMI	Jap
July	–	Super James Pond 2	platform	Victor	Jap
July	–	GP-1	racing	Atlus	Jap
July	–	Battle Dodgeball 2	sports	Banpresto	Jap
July	–	World Heroes	beat-'em-up	Sunsoft	Jap
July	–	Chemist Harry	–	Altron	Jap
July	–	Devil Loveless	RPG	Yanoman	Jap
July	–	Holy Sword Legend 2	RPG	Square	Jap
July	–	WWF Royal Rumble	sports	Acclaim	Jap
July	–	Sonic Wings	shoot-'em-up	Video System	Jap
July	–	Super F1 Circus 2	racing	Nikon Busan	Jap
July	–	Triff Animal	strategy	Cyclone	Jap
July	–	Super Air Diver	simulation	Asmik	Jap
July	–	Super Horse Racing (*Again? – Ed.*)	sports	Imax	Jap
July	–	Suchipi Mah Jong	strategy	Jaleco	Jap
July	–	Sgt. Thunder's Combat	strategy	Yonesawa 21	Jap
July	–	Super High Impact	sports	Acclaim Japan	Jap
July	–	Sanrio World Smash Ball!	sports	Character Soft	Jap
July	–	Madara 2	RPG	Konami	Jap
July	–	Super Robot Wars	strategy	Hect	Jap
July	–	Top Racer 2	racing	Kemco	Jap
July	–	Dream + Illusion	–	Hect	Jap

Just remember not to blame us if the publishers muck everything up by not releasing things when they've said they will.

BLABBERMOUTH

NEW!

Exciting International Gaming Gossip

with Kriss and Tel

Kris and Tel are two little robots (you may recognise them from elsewhere in the mag). They are also, quite possibly, the biggest gossips the world has ever seen. They're always on the phone nattering on to each other about this and that, and – luckily for us – they're a couple of real gamefreaks, so one of the things they talk about most are rumours they've heard flying about in the games industry. Even more luckily for us, we've had Lance Carbine attach a tap to their phone line, and we can now listen in on what they're saying to each other. Let's grab an earful, shall we...?

☎ Hey, Tel, you know how plenty of programmers want to use the Super FX chip, but think it might be too expensive? Well, it seems at least some of them have decided to go with other – hopefully cheaper – custom DSP chips instead. Seta are using their own Super Custom Chip in their *Shogi* board game, for instance, while Asmic have a different one in *Super Air Diver*.

☎ Yeah, I heard a rumour that Ocean might be doing a Super FX game, but now it seems like my source got the info a bit warped. The rumour came out of the fact that they've signed up top 3D game specialists DiD (the people behind *F-29 Retaliator*, *Epic* and *Robocop 3*) to an exclusive six product deal over the next three years, the first of which should be ready some time in '94. It'll all be 3D stuff, of course, but I suspect it'll really be coming out on Super Nintendo CD, not the basic machine at all.

☎ I know one company that definitely are doing a Super FX game though! It looks like Elite will be the first publisher (outside of Nintendo) to release a game using the new chip. *Super Racing SFX*, as it's provisionally been called, will be an off-road driving game using 3D polygons (possibly mouse control), and a realistic simulation model that's being developed with the help of an ex-Ford engineer. Nintendo are planning to show off the game at the Chicago CES in June, Tel.

☎ We'll just have to wait then, Kris. Speaking of Elite, though, you'll remember that one of their biggest hits on the Game Boy was *Dr Franken*, a platform game starring a Frankenstein's monster type thing. And now they're doing a Super Nintendo version, scheduled for release in October. Er, that's about it, really.

☎ Yeah, I forgot you were into Game Boy stuff. You like playing your Game Boy on buses, trains and the like, don't you? And planes too, right? Well, you might not be able to for much longer. Airport people in Canada are currently wondering whether to ban portable games machines on planes after reports that they might interfere with the communications systems!

☎ Blimey! That's weird news. Going back to what you were saying about that Elite off-road game, though, fans of seminal four wheel drive release *Super Off Road* will be pleased to hear that Tradewest have a sequel in the pipeline. But rather than the overhead, *Super Sprint*-style perspective the original took, *Ivan Stewart's Super Off Road Baja 1000* is being done in a 3D, from-behind-the-car fashion. That essential jiggling-about-over-jumps-and-bumps gameplay is being retained, however, and the graphics look pretty smart. Release date: September 1993.

☎ Excellent! Speaking of games everyone's eager to see, Accolade are going to have to hope that the hype surrounding *Bubsy*, their forthcoming platform game, doesn't fizzle out before July – the game won't now get a UK release until then, thanks to problems getting a release slot through Bandai.

☎ One game I'm really looking forward to is the Bram Stoker's *Dracula* licence, which has been picked up by Sony, who're doing – yes! – a platform game based on the film. Use of Mode 7 will create an 'astounding 3D experience', apparently. I can't wait! (Hope it's not too scarey though.)

☎ Yeah, yeah, but games based on films are dead common – did you know things are now going the other way? You may have already heard they're working on a *Street Fighter II* movie, but did you also realise that the copycats have begun making rip-offs of it in Japan already? The pretender film I've heard of is basically a series of fights between a whole load of colourful protagonists, including karate experts, boxers, pro wrestler and the like. It doesn't sound as if Emma Thompson will be in it...

☎ That *Street Fighter II* is never out of the news, is it? You know it's just about to come out on both Mega Drive and PC Engine, don't you? The Mega Drive release is in June, while the Engine version comes on 20 Mbit Hu-card, and with a special six button joypad. The price is said to be kept under ¥10,000 in Japan (about £57). Great news for MD and Engine owners, eh? Of course, those who've read the first page of Super Express this month will know there's even *more* exciting *SFII* news on the way for Super NES owners...

☎ Damn right, Tel. But even the ordinary version is still a very popular game, ain't it? In fact, just about the only game that ever had more people queuing up for it in Japan than *Street Fighter II* did are the big-name RPGs, especially the *Dragon Quest* series. Well, watch out, *Dragon Quest V*! It looks like Sega wants a slice of your action. You see, rumour has it that the next big project for the Sega in-house boys is going to be a massive RPG. The game's main character is to be pushed in comics, cartoons and – well, everywhere Sega can think of, really – to try and create another *Sonic*.

☎ Speaking of people with spikey hair, did you know Violet Berlin off *Bad Influence!* is doing a series of five minute game challenges to be shown twice a day on the satellite Children's Channel during June and July? Video games are everywhere these days!

☎ Yeah, they're advertised on TV all the time in Japan. Can you imagine Take That or someone appearing in the British Nintendo TV ads, saying how great they think the games are? Probably not, but that sort of thing happens all the time over there. In fact, just now the the RPG *Sword World SFC* is being pushed by Japanese teen idols WINK, who jump up and down and shout about it. Weird, eh?

☎ Yeah, Kris, it's just a pity more UK software houses don't do TV ads for their games when they come out. I'd love to see an ad based on *Out To Lunch*, an all-new platform game (starring a chef called Pierre) that's being cooked up by Mindscape's in-house programmers at the moment. It should appear later this year, as should *Alfred Chicken*, another platform game (this time centring on a chicken called – yes – Alfred) which is already out, and looking good, on the Game Boy.

☎ And don't forget Tel, Mindscape also have the Miracle piano-teaching system coming up later this Summer. It's a combination of a keyboard and a tuition cart, and was very well received on the Mega Drive by *Mega*, *Super Play*'s 'sister' magazine. Also, baseball devotees will be delighted to hear that July sees the release of *Cal Ripken Jr Baseball*, the import version of which received 70% in the last issue of *Super Play*.

☎ And that, I think, is about all the good news I can think of at the moment. Unless you've got anything else, I think I'd better get back on the phone to my other contacts.

☎ Yeah, I've one more thing – a whole bunch of new Super Nintendo games from Psygnosis, who've not had all that much to do with the machine before. They had *Lemmings*, which went through Sunsoft, and now there's *Lemmings 2*, which has received rave reviews on the Amiga – it's leaps and bounds ahead of the original game. Psygnosis will publish this one themselves. They're also working on *Puggsy*, a really nice-looking platform game which we mentioned in issue 3, and is now set for a Christmas release, and a split-screen two-player spell casting game called *Wiz 'n' Liz* too.

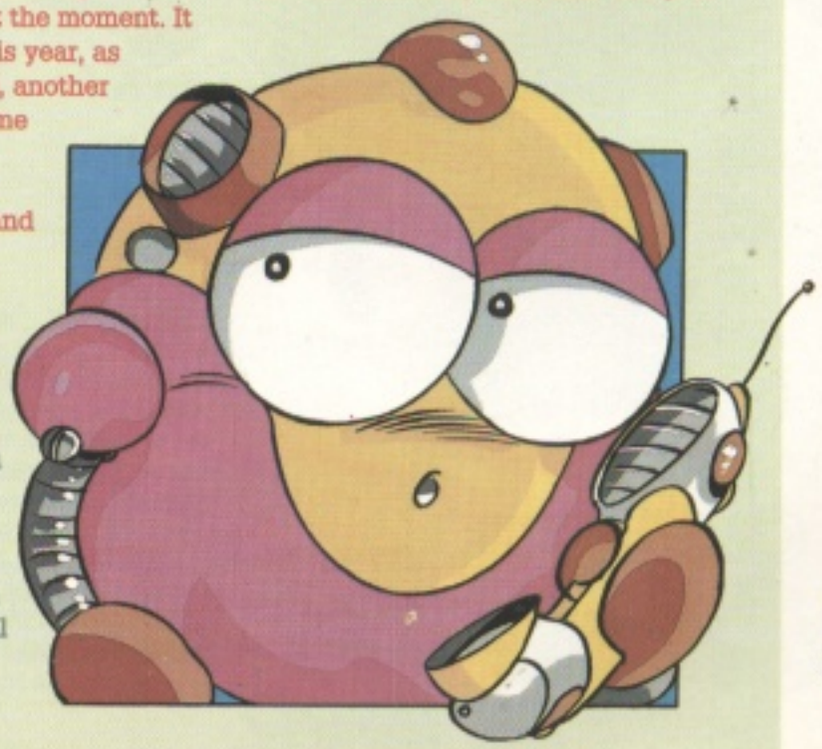
☎ Great stuff. Before we go, I've thought of one more thing too. You see, Capcom have got a new coin-op out in the Japan at the moment – *Muscle Bomber*, a wrestling game – and you know how I love beat-'em-ups. The rules are simple, as are the controls, and the special moves are said to be very easy to execute, even for someone with only two fingers like me. This could make a great Super Nintendo game...

☎ Finally Tel, those wizards at Konami are back! *Genbare Goemon 2* (*Legend Of The Mystical Ninja 2*) is coming later in the year! First though, they've got *Dragon's Magic* in June.

☎ What's that, then?

☎ You'll just have to wait and see, but don't get *too* excited. Till then Tel!

☎ Till next time, then, Kris. See you!



BIG PRIZES!

(Brash theme tune)

IT'S... MATT'S FULL HOUSE!

Hi folks!

Why the spangly suit, you're probably wondering. Why the even-bigger-than-usual grin? Well, you remember the gigantic competition we organised to celebrate the launch of *Super Play*? We're doing it again – and with even more prizes than ever before! And, for some reason, we've decided to style it as a sort of TV quiz show, with Jason, Sue and Jonathan as the contestants, and (eek!) me as the host.

Now, playing Matt's Full House couldn't be simpler. I'm going to ask the contestants nine questions, and they'll each give an answer to each one. But it hardly needs me to tell you that Jason, Sue and Jonathan aren't the brightest people in the world, and the chances are that only one of them is going to get each question right. What you've got to do is work out who you're going to side with each time, and circle that answer on the coupon.

OKAY, HERE'S WHAT WE'VE GOT:
FIVE copies of *Desert Strike* and FIVE copies of *PGA Tour Golf* from Electronic Arts; FIFTY *The Lost Vikings* T-shirts from Interplay; TEN *Bubsy* T-shirts, TEN *Bubsy* pin-badges and TEN *Bubsy* ordinary badges from Accolade; TWENTY *Alfred Chicken* T-shirts from Mindscape; THREE Pro Action Replays and THREE T-shirts from Datel; TEN *3x3 Eyes* videos and posters from Manga Video; a QJ TopFighter joystick from Spectravideo; FIVE copies of *Super Mario World Games Secrets* from Computer Manuals; and last (and, to be honest, least) TEN *Super Play* goody bags.

THE RULES

* All entries must be received by 17 June 1993.
* The editor's decision is final.
* Employees of Future Publishing and the other participating companies (which probably accounts for about half of the population) aren't allowed to enter this competition.

MATT'S FULL HOUSE

1 For a *Lost Vikings* T-shirt, tell me the list price of a Volvo 940 2.3 SE.

2 For a *Bubsy* T-shirt, a *Bubsy* pin-badge and a *Bubsy* ordinary badge, tell me what a 'busby' is.

3 For a copy of *Desert Strike* or *PGA Tour Golf*, tell me what the charge on an electron is.

4 To win a *3X3 Eyes* video, and a poster, tell me what 'manganese' means.

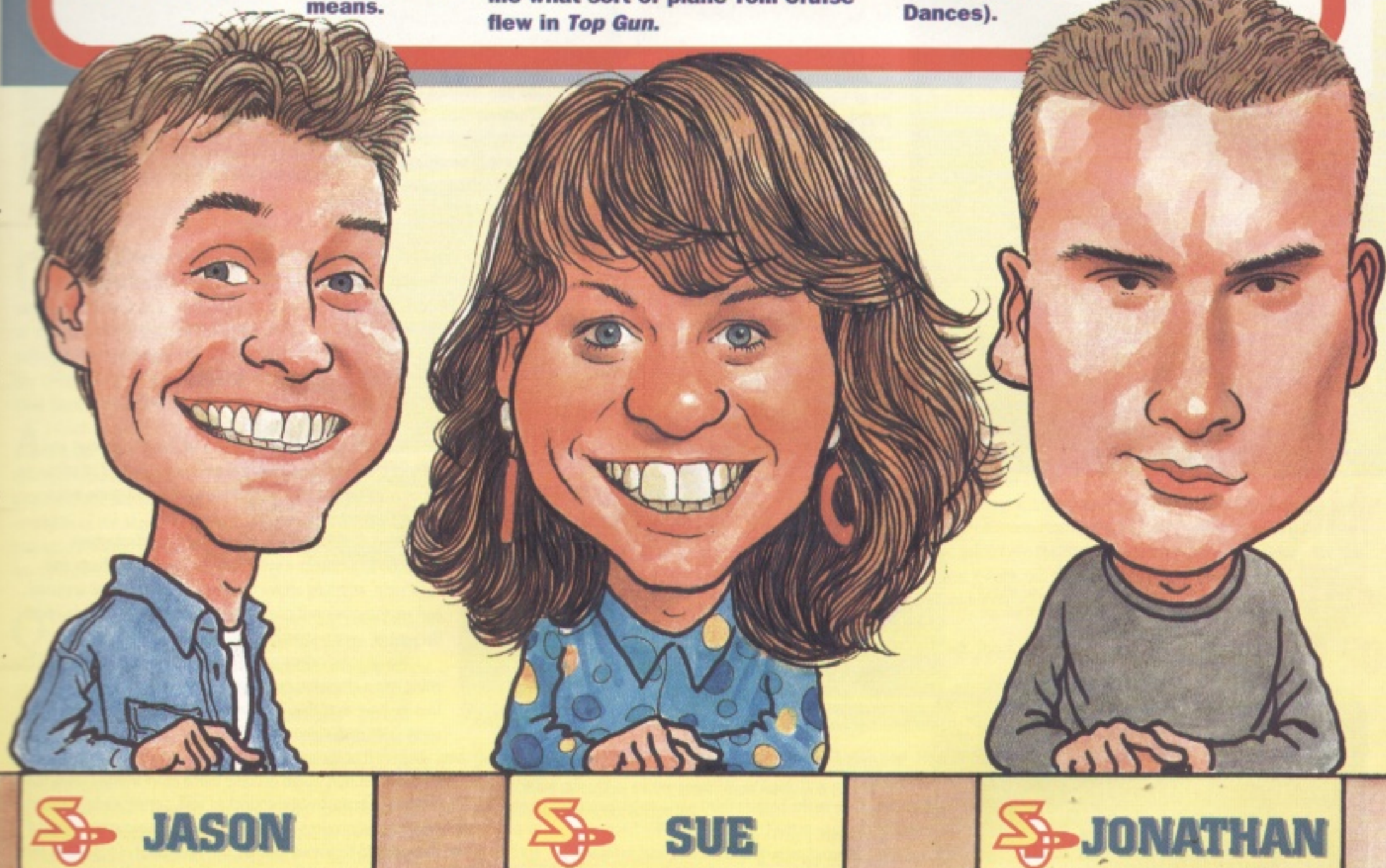
5 For a chic *Alfred Chicken* T-shirt, read our news pages and tell me exactly what sort of a game *Alfred Chicken* will be (when it comes out).

6 For a Pro Action Replay, along with a Datel T-shirt, tell me one of the things Action Man says when you pull the string on his back.

7 If you'd like a top-of-the-range QJ TopFighter joystick, then tell me what sort of plane Tom Cruise flew in *Top Gun*.

8 If you'd like to get your hands on a copy of the *Super Mario World Game Secrets* book, thus solving all your *Super Mario World* problems, I'd like to know how many pages there are in it (roughly).

9 If, for some reason, you'd like a *Super Play* goody bag, tell me how many symphonies Rachmaninov wrote (not including the Symphonic Dances).



JASON | SUE | JONATHAN

1. £21,985
2. A hat
3. Positive
4. The language used in Japanese cartoons
5. A *Super Probotector*-style shoot-'em-up
6. 'Banzai!'
7. A Spitfire
8. 140
9. 3

1. £5
2. A boat
3. Negative
4. The force surrounding a magnet
5. A platform game a bit like *Mario World*
6. 'Shut that door!'
7. An F-14 Tomcat
8. 900
9. 6

1. £16,995
2. A freshwater fish
3. Fifty quid, and more if you want any 'funny stuff'.
4. A metallic element
5. A poultry farming simulation like *Aerobiz*
6. 'Give me some cover!'
7. A B-17 Flying Fortress
8. 280
9. 9

Simply circle one answer for each of the questions above, fill in your name and address, cut around the dotted line and send the whole thing to: Matt's Full House, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

Oh yes, and the prizes for question 4 carry an 18 certificate. Please get a parent or guardian to sign here if you'd like to win that one:

.....

SUPER PLAY Interview

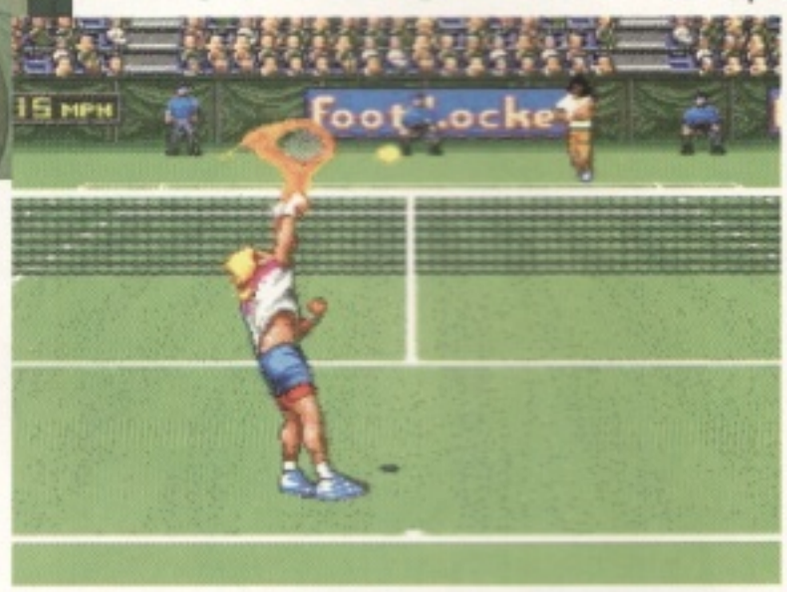
Mark Lewis, Electronic Arts

By Dave Roberts

Electronic Arts is America's biggest games publisher across all popular systems – and thus one of the very biggest games publishers in the world. Though they develop all types of game on console formats – chiefly Mega Drive and now Super Nintendo – they're best known for their very popular sports releases. Mark Lewis, an American, is in charge of their sizeable British operation, based at Langley near Slough.

MARK LEWIS IS THE UK BOSS OF ELECTRONIC ARTS, AMERICA'S BIGGEST GAMES PUBLISHER. WE SPOKE TO HIM ABOUT ALL THINGS SUPER NINTENDO (AND MORE)

Above: The man himself. Mark Lewis is UK boss of EA, and an important player in the UK games industry.
Right: Absolute's *Amazing Tennis*, to be released here through EA.



Q Okay, Mark, first off, how does Electronic Arts fit into the global league table of cartridge publishers?

A To the best of my knowledge, we're the biggest third party publisher in the world. That's certainly the case in the US and Europe. We have offices in Britain, North America, Japan, Australia and Canada, and in total we employ over 1,000 people.

Q Considering you're such a global force, it seems that you've taken a lot of time to put your weight behind the Super Nintendo.

A In Europe that's true, but that was mainly due to EA going through a very painful learning process about publishing Nintendo cartridges over here. Every Super Nintendo game that we want to sell has to be submitted to Nintendo Of Japan for their approval, and then manufacturing. We gave them some games last Summer, and were hoping to have them available for Christmas, but basically the approval and manufacturing process took a lot longer than we thought.

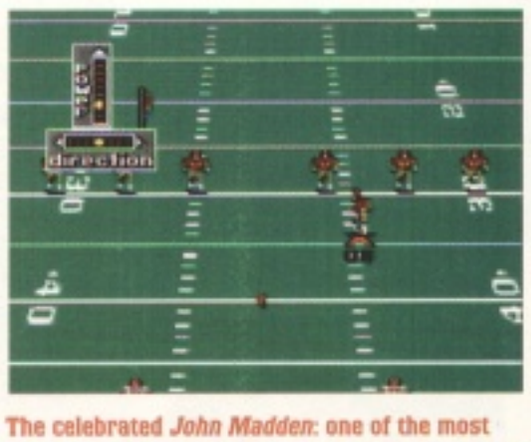
We're up and running now though. *Desert Strike* is out, *PGA Tour Golf* is out, and over the next few weeks you'll see *Madden '93*, *NHLPA Hockey*, *Bulls Vs Blazers* and *BOB – Search For Ultraforce*. I know some of these have been around on grey import for a while, but these will be official UK versions.

Q So you've got around six in a couple of months – a pretty busy schedule. Does this signal your intent to be as prolific on the Super Nintendo as you are on the Mega Drive?

A We will be as prolific as Nintendo allow us to be.

Q Is that as prolific as you are on the Mega Drive?

A No. We've been given 12 slots a year by Nintendo, which is fewer games than we'll produce for the Mega Drive. That said, we're also handling the Super NES range of a US publisher called Absolute Entertainment, and they have six slots. So in total we'll be distributing 18 games – that's very nearly as many as we'll be putting on the Mega Drive.



The celebrated *John Madden*: one of the most popular of all EA games, both here and in the US.

Q Do you feel at all restricted by Nintendo's licencing policy? 12 games is a reasonable amount, but they're still telling you how many you are allowed to produce.

A I think the licencing policy is fundamentally wrong. I think it is a completely fallacious idea that by controlling the amount of games released you also control the quality of games released. I suppose I understand their logic, but I definitely don't agree with it.

People ought to be able to publish what they want and then let commercial factors take over. Sales or lack of sales should determine whether or not it was a good game, not a team of assessors in Japan.

There could be some sort of quality control where Nintendo implements a system of grading for products and says 'right, anything above this level gets our seal of approval, and anything below it goes out without the seal'. As it is, I find the system very restrictive.

We all have videos or CD players, and we're all capable of going into a store and buying what we want with the money that we have available. Why can't we be trusted to do the same thing with video games?

If anything I believe that the overall quality of games would go up as a result, because the competition would become much more fierce. I think that there would be more non-mainstream product as well, perhaps edutainment or productivity titles. An equivalent of the independent music scene would spring up, and there would be games that are the equivalent of films that win the Palm D'Or awards in Cannes rather than the Oscars in Hollywood.

Q Do you think that Nintendo will ever relent and allow people to publish without restrictions?

A I think that it's incumbent upon all third party publishers to keep lobbying for it, to remain united and keep a dialogue open with Nintendo.

Above: *Bulls Vs Blazers* basketball – another well-known sport sim.
Left: *PGA Tour Golf* – the first officially released UK golf game.

Above: *BOB*, the recent platform release. EA have had some problems coming up with decent arcade-style action games. Right: It still isn't clear whether ultra violent *Road Rash* will appear on SNES.

Q For the moment, though, you have 12 slots and when the next foursome arrive, you'll have filled half of them. Most of the games have crossed over after enjoying success on the Mega Drive. Do you think that the SNES versions have been just as good?

A I think so, yes. Obviously the machines have different capabilities, but I think we have played to the strengths of the Super Nintendo and have released products that I am extremely happy with.

Q There is a school of thought that says if any other company had made its debut with these Super NES products, they would be warmly applauded. As it is Electronic Arts and people generally are used to the phenomenal Mega Drive versions, people are saying 'it's good, but it's not that good'. Our own editor, Matt Bielby said, 'Sad, but true, EA still haven't got the hang of translating their top-notch Mega Drive sports games to Super Nintendo.'

A I respect Matt's opinion – honestly, I do – but I think that whatever version comes out first, people go 'Wow, that's brilliant' because they haven't seen it before. That thrill can't be repeated and so can't be part of the enjoyment of playing the Super NES versions.

Q What highlights would you pick out of your forthcoming line-up?

A Well, *Bulls Vs Blazers*, *Hockey* and *Madden '93* all add to the sports range, and are all exceptional quality. *Bulls Vs Blazers* is interesting because it will be hitting the Mega Drive and Super Nintendo at the same time – that's the first time we've managed that.

BOB – Search For Ultraforce will actually be premiered on the Super Nintendo ahead of the Mega Drive and, again, this is a first. Actually it will be interesting to see the reviews of that. I wonder if the Mega Drive magazines will say 'Well, it's good, but it's not quite as good as the SNES version'. That would back up my argument.

BOB is a bit of a different product for us. He's a character in a platform game, but he's a character with an attitude in the mould of Zool or Sonic. That should be out in late May. (*Indeed, it's reviewed this issue – Ed.*)

Q What lies beyond that quartet?

A There's some Absolute Entertainment stuff to come that is going to be pretty awesome. They've got *TOYS*, based on the Robin Williams movie of course, and they've got *Amazing Tennis* which is a great sports game, a rival to *Jimmy Connors Tennis*.

Q What about from EA itself?

A In the Autumn we're going to launch a new batch of sports titles written with a new sports engine, and they'll be spectacular. We're doing basketball, wrestling and football.

Q When you say football, what do you mean?

A I mean the powerful, awesome game played by hulking giants.

Q Ah, you're talking about American football here, not *proper* football, aren't you?

A Actually, we are working on a *proper* football game at the moment that's been designed in Europe and that should be out in early 1994.

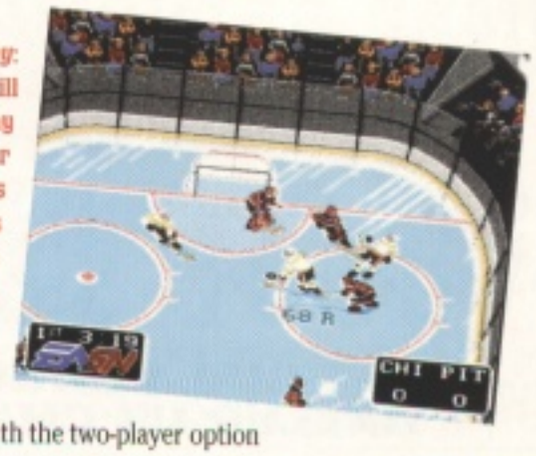
Q Will your whole line-up be completely dominated by sports games?

A It's an important area for us, but I want to make absolutely sure that we release great titles in other genres, too. *Desert Strike* has already made its mark and we have plans to release the follow-up, *Jungle Strike*, at some stage, although I can't say at present whether it'll be ready for Christmas or not.

Q Another hall-of-fame contender on the Mega Drive is the classic motorbike racing game, *Road Rash*. Will that be appearing on the Super Nintendo?

A That's a question that we're trying to answer at this moment. We want to release *Road Rash 2* with the two-player option and split screen, and at the moment we're looking at whether or not it is possible to do that justice on the SNES. If we can't then we won't do it.

'I wonder if Mega Drive mags will look at it (*BOB*) and say it's not as good as the SNES version.'



***NHLPA Hockey*: there are still those who say that EA Super NES games aren't quite as good as the Mega Drive ones, but this is close.**

Q Will your Super NES release schedule ever catch up with your Mega Drive schedule?

A No, it won't. There'll be the odd game that arrives at the same time, or even on the SNES first, but this is such a fast-moving industry that there's no time for catch-up.

Q Why don't you publish for the NES and Game Boy?

A We have always been a technology driven company, a leading edge company. 16-bit and 32-bit systems give the player a greater feeling of being involved in the interactive worlds we create. That can't be done on 8-bit machines so we don't publish for them.

Q So, EA games won't appear on the NES and Game Boy?

A Some will through licencing deals. I know we've already sold off the Game Boy rights to some of our titles.

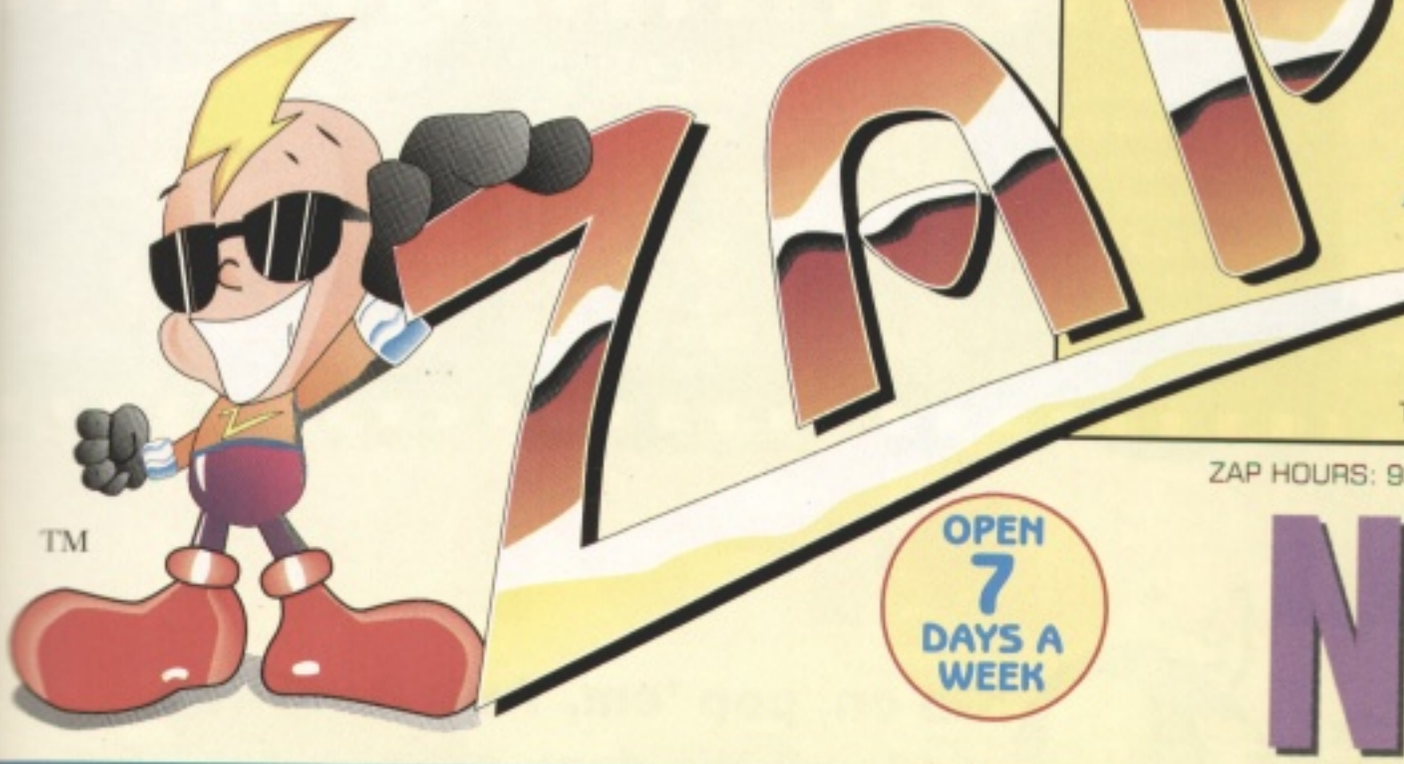
Q Will you be releasing any games that use the Super FX chip?

A No, I don't think so. It is an incredibly expensive chip, and I really don't think that we could produce games for it that we could sell at prices that wouldn't cause a revolution. We like what it does, but there are no plans to support it because, commercially, it just can't be done.

Mark, thank you.

***Super Play* has already reviewed most of the games Mark talked about in this interview. *Desert Strike* got 90% in SP4, *PGA Tour* earned 60% in SP5, *Madden '93* was reviewed at 83% in SP4, *NHLPA Hockey* got 87% in SP4, *Bulls Vs Blazers* earned 83% in SP5 and *BOB* is reviewed this issue. Of the Absolute Entertainment games, *TOYS* we've yet to see, while *Amazing Tennis* earned 80% in SP3.**

***TOYS* (left) and *Jungle Strike* (above) are two big names games due to come through EA during the remainder of the year. *Jungle Strike*, in particular, is almost guaranteed to be a massive hit.**



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Above: *BOB*, the recent platform release. EA have had some problems coming up with decent arcade-style action games. Right: It still isn't clear whether ultra violent *Road Rash* will appear on SNES.

Q For the moment, though, you have 12 slots and when the next foursome arrive, you'll have filled half of them. Most of the games have crossed over after enjoying success on the Mega Drive. Do you think that the SNES versions have been just as good?

A I think so, yes. Obviously the machines have different capabilities, but I think we have played to the strengths of the Super Nintendo and have released products that I am extremely happy with.

Q There is a school of thought that says if any other company had made its debut with these Super NES products, they would be warmly applauded. As it is Electronic Arts and people generally are used to the phenomenal Mega Drive versions, people are saying 'it's good, but it's not that good'. Our own editor, Matt Bielby said, 'Sad, but true, EA still haven't got the hang of translating their top-notch Mega Drive sports games to Super Nintendo.'

A I respect Matt's opinion – honestly, I do – but I think that whatever version comes out first, people go 'Wow, that's brilliant' because they haven't seen it before. That thrill can't be repeated and so can't be part of the enjoyment of playing the Super NES versions.

Q What highlights would you pick out of your forthcoming line-up?

A Well, *Bulls Vs Blazers*, *Hockey* and *Madden '93* all add to the sports range, and are all exceptional quality. *Bulls Vs Blazers* is interesting because it will be hitting the Mega Drive and Super Nintendo at the same time – that's the first time we've managed that.

BOB – Search For Ultraforce will actually be premiered on the Super Nintendo ahead of the Mega Drive and, again, this is a first. Actually it will be interesting to see the reviews of that. I wonder if the Mega Drive magazines will say 'Well, it's good, but it's not quite as good as the SNES version'. That would back up my argument.

BOB is a bit of a different product for us. He's a character in a platform game, but he's a character with an attitude in the mould of Zool or Sonic. That should be out in late May. (*Indeed, it's reviewed this issue – Ed.*)

Q What lies beyond that quartet?

A There's some Absolute Entertainment stuff to come that is going to be pretty awesome. They've got *TOYS*, based on the Robin Williams movie of course, and they've got *Amazing Tennis* which is a great sports game, a rival to *Jimmy Connors Tennis*.

Q What about from EA itself?

A In the Autumn we're going to launch a new batch of sports titles written with a new sports engine, and they'll be spectacular. We're doing basketball, wrestling and football.

Q When you say football, what do you mean?

A I mean the powerful, awesome game played by hulking giants.

Q Ah, you're talking about American football here, not *proper* football, aren't you?

A Actually, we are working on a *proper* football game at the moment that's been designed in Europe and that should be out in early 1994.

Q Will your whole line-up be completely dominated by sports games?

A It's an important area for us, but I want to make absolutely sure that we release great titles in other genres, too. *Desert Strike* has already made its mark and we have plans to release the follow-up, *Jungle Strike*, at some stage, although I can't say at present whether it'll be ready for Christmas or not.

Q Another hall-of-fame contender on the Mega Drive is the classic motorbike racing game, *Road Rash*. Will that be appearing on the Super Nintendo?

A That's a question that we're trying to answer at this moment. We want to release *Road Rash 2* with the two-player option and split screen, and at the moment we're looking at whether or not it is possible to do that justice on the SNES. If we can't then we won't do it.

***NHLPA Hockey*: there are still those who say that EA Super NES games aren't quite as good as the Mega Drive ones, but this is close.**

Q Will your Super NES release schedule ever catch up with your Mega Drive schedule?

A No, it won't. There'll be the odd game that arrives at the same time, or even on the SNES first, but this is such a fast-moving industry that there's no time for catch-up.

Q Why don't you publish for the NES and Game Boy?

A We have always been a technology driven company, a leading edge company. 16-bit and 32-bit systems give the player a greater feeling of being involved in the interactive worlds we create. That can't be done on 8-bit machines so we don't publish for them.

Q So, EA games won't appear on the NES and Game Boy?

A Some will through licencing deals. I know we've already sold off the Game Boy rights to some of our titles.

Q Will you be releasing any games that use the Super FX chip?

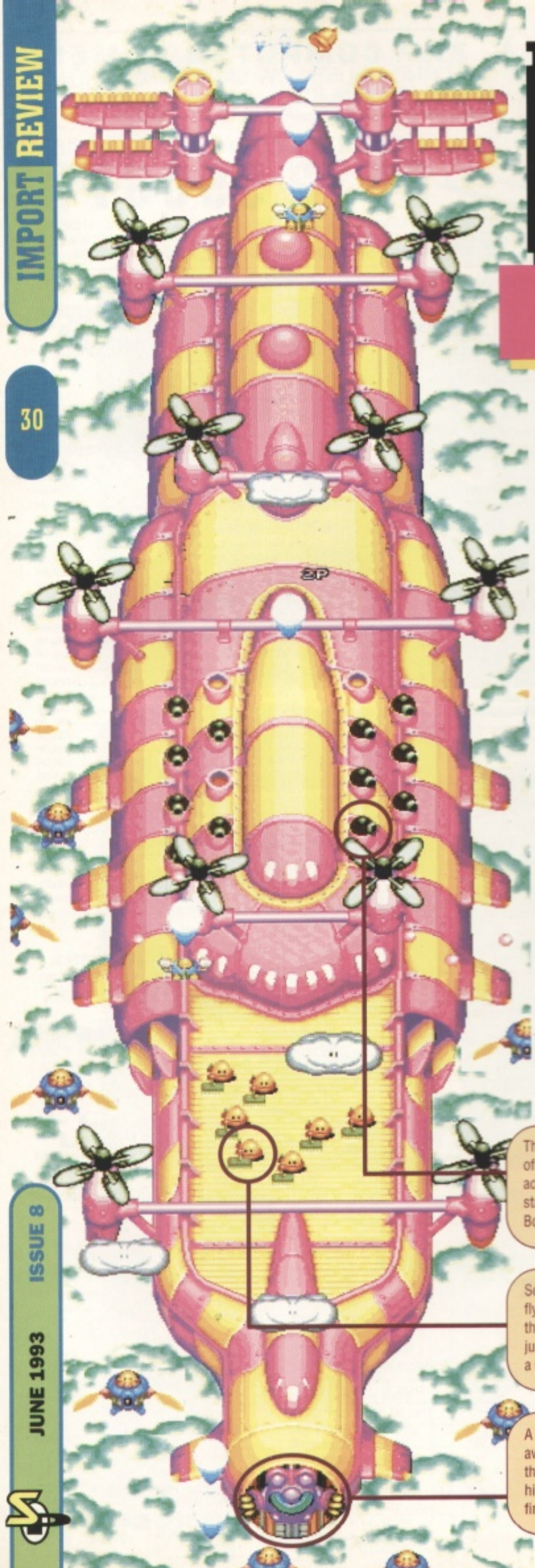
A No, I don't think so. It is an incredibly expensive chip, and I really don't think that we could produce games for it that we could sell at prices that wouldn't cause a revolution. We like what it does, but there are no plans to support it because, commercially, it just can't be done.

Mark, thank you.

Super Play has already reviewed most of the games Mark talked about in this interview. *Desert Strike* got 90% in SP4, *PGA Tour* earned 60% in SP5, *Madden '93* was reviewed at 83% in SP4, *NHLPA Hockey* got 87% in SP4, *Bulls Vs Blazers* earned 83% in SP5 and *BOB* is reviewed this issue. Of the Absolute Entertainment games, *TOYS* we've yet to see, while *Amazing Tennis* earned 80% in SP3.

"I wonder if Mega Drive mags will look at it (*BOB*) and say it's not as good as the SNES version."

TOYS (left) and *Jungle Strike* (above) are two big names games due to come through EA during the remainder of the year. *Jungle Strike*, in particular, is almost guaranteed to be a massive hit.



The giant airship has lots of cannons that don't actually appear until you start to fly over them. Bombs away!

Scrubbing decks as you fly down the ship are these little blobs. They just look so cute it seems a real shame to kill them.

A mutant Twin Bee-alike awaits you at the front of the airship. He launches himself at you and then fires away. Kill 'im quick.

Dr Mardock's captured the lovely Madoka, so Twin Bee and Win Bee are called on to ruff 'im up a bit. Seven levels lie between you and his lair. So let's get on with it!

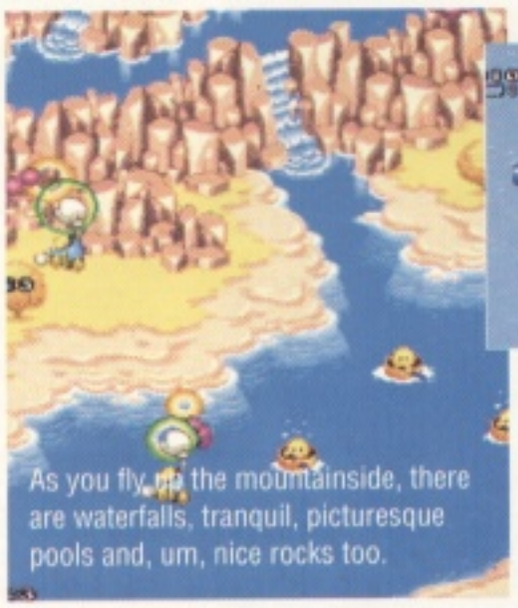
POP'N T

'Go on, pop 'em, Twin Bee! Pop 'em!' We deny *anyone* not to find themselves shouting this, or something like it, while playing Konami's latest stunner – a cute shoot-'em-up where the baddies seem to 'pop' rather than explode. There's some dispute in the office over how we should write the name, but none about the quality...

LEVEL 1: Dandelion Town

Just like in the original coin-op, *Twin Bee* (or *Bells And Whistles* as it's known over here), two players can take part simultaneously. As with most two-player co-operative games, there aren't any gameplay features that improve on the standard one-player mode (apart from being able to chuck your pal around the screen). And, naturally, it's easier with two players, despite sharing the eight credits.

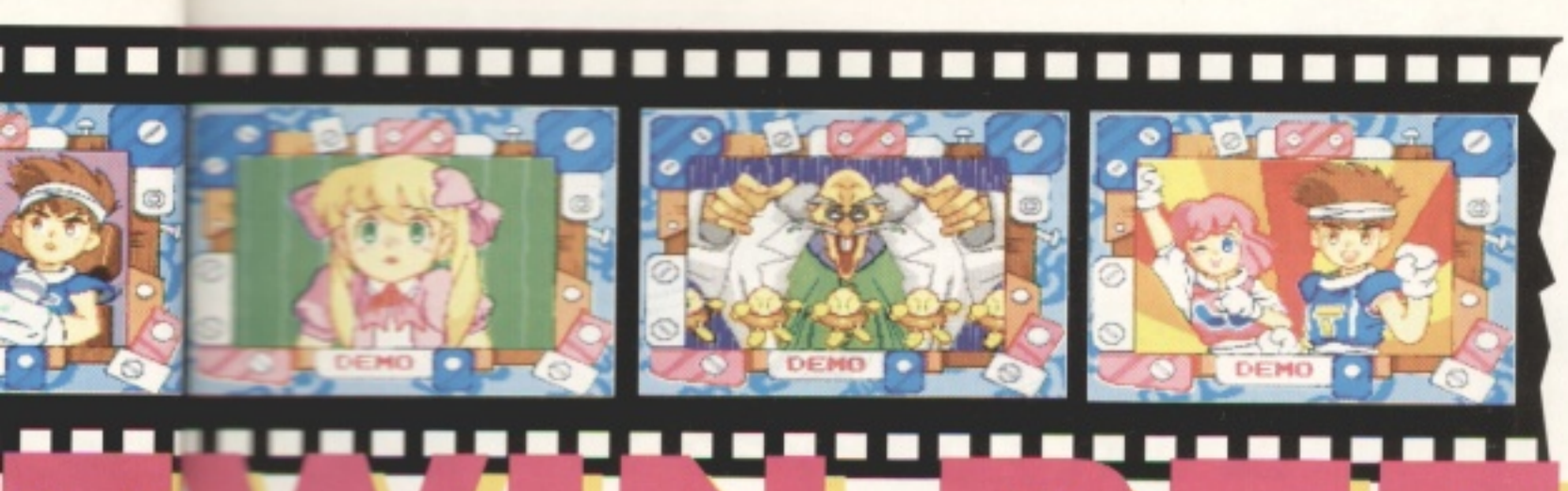
Twin Bee's bomb can be used to take out enemies on the ground. In this case, these walking pineapples.



As you fly up the mountainside, there are waterfalls, tranquil, picturesque pools and, um, nice rocks too.

The first end-of-level bad guy is a cross between a diving bell and a cannon-laden metal flying thing.

From left to right: Aw! A walking pineapple, a blob, a bathtub blob and fab parachuting blob, complete with Walkman.



TWIN BEE

Japanese Release

Game: Pop'n Twin Bee
Publisher: Konami
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GLOVES OFF!

As in Parodius, bells are the source of all power-ups. There are only two main firing weapons – green wave-type lasers and fluffy cloud-like things, but Twin Bee and Win Bee both sport hefty punches, self-targetting bombs and a special Chiba multi-attack weapon – where mini versions of our heroes fly about the screen. Here's what everything does:

- Blue Bell: Speed up
- Green Bell: Option
- Pink Bell: Shield
- Purple bell: Green laser
- Silver Bell: Fluffy bullets

Those bells in full

LEVEL 2: Underwater

On the second level the whole screen has this kind of wavy effect on it. The range of aquatic critters is fabulous.

These glass bubble-enclosed cities look particularly nice as they scroll by in parallax.

When bosses appear there is occasionally some slow-down.

These fish are truly lovely.

LEVEL 3: In the clouds

As in most Konami shoot-'em-ups, there are up to four 'options' to collect (that tail behind the player). These can be configured at the start to move in different patterns.

Dodge those lasers! That red thing on the right only starts pumping out these after half of it has been destroyed.

In typical shoot-'em-up-style, the aliens tend to arrange themselves in formations. Here, they just lie like sitting ducks while you shoot 'em.

These are arguably some of the prettiest graphics ever.

This one will really take you by surprise. As usual though, dodge the lasers and bring it to its knees. What a fab-looking boss.

Brilliant bouncing blobs! Perfect pandas!

LEVEL 4: The airship

The fourth stage is different from the others – it's a giant multi-screen airship affair, where you start at the top and gradually work your way down. Once at the bottom, shoot the Twin Bee-alike bad guy and then it's back up the screen to face an onslaught of new foes. Across the page we've glued all the screens together to show you what it's like.

A selection of fab airborne critters.

LEVEL 5: The waterfall

Another example of some really fab graphics. Shoot the ring of mutant ostriches and, erm, look at the incredibly nice waterfalls and rocks. Yes, the action slackens a little to let you appreciate the time that's gone into the backdrops.

Later in the level there are these bridges cluttered with nice little houses.

A really funny boss. Shoot the thing in the middle and the eyes of the blob-like critters pop out in shock!

Teddies, bunnies, hippos, pigs and mice – all these made Lisa go 'aaaaahhhh'.

LEVEL 7: Dr Mardock's base

Exploding chimneys throw out superblobs.

The seventh level is a mechanical setting with cogs and pipes everywhere. The boss is fabulous.

Babies, cardmen and superblobs with capes!

LEVEL 6: Dr Mardock's factory

It may look like the end boss, but it isn't.

A sort of factory-type set-up where the evil Doc Mardock plans to overthrow the world, or something.

These guys pile out of Doc Mardock's face.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

It's *Pop'n Twin Bee*-tastic! It's Poptabulous! It's... (*Watch it... – Ed.*) It's blooming marvellous, is what it is. (At least when you first sit down to play it.) What else did you expect from a Konami game?

Indeed, I'd argue – and I doubt if many of you would disagree with me – that Konami has one of the best reputations of any software house in the world, particularly on the Super Nintendo. And with good reason – they're just so damn reliable. Their closest rivals occasionally release the odd duffer (take Capcom's *Magic Sword*, for instance), but not these guys, so it'll come as no surprise to anyone if I announce right away that *Pop'n Twin Bee* is a good game, and as polished as anything they've done before. It's a shame that it's all so predictable, but there you go.

For a start, *Pop'n Twin Bee*'s graphics are a work of genius, even nicer than those in *Parodius* (the nearest comparable game). Fabulously-shaded parallax scrolling, massive boss characters, tiny ultra-cute critters – they're all here. The result is colourful, imaginative, funny, clear and easy on the eye – and I love it. The code behind the graphics is of a similarly high standard – even the sprite-handling is brilliant, with things only slowing down on the rarest of occasions.

However, don't go getting the idea that things have been kept deliberately simple to try and avoid such problems coming up – for the vast bulk of the game these are the busiest screens we've seen since *Super Aleste*, yet they're still devoid of even the slightest hint of judder or flicker. It's amazing how far programming has progressed since the days of *Gradius 3* et al.

Indeed, technically the only bit of the game I could legitimately pick fault with is the sound, which – while packed with great effects and digitised speech – comes across as fairly bland compared to the rest of it. The main fault is that the music lacks the soul and humour of, say, the *Parodius* soundtrack. It's not bad, just not as good as some things we've heard before.

Which brings us to the big stumbling block. You see, much the same thing could be said about the gameplay too. It's good, but it ain't as good as I'd hoped it'd be. On difficulty level one (there are seven, as in *Parodius*) it's a doddle, and I finished it on my first go. To be fair, though, a lot of the enemy attacks are missing on this level. It *is* challenging on the higher ones. The game's lack of stages is another problem (there are only seven of these too), and makes the whole thing seem a bit, well, disposable. It also, somehow, fails to be very thrilling – things are just too cute, too nice, and move too sedately for your adrenalin to really get pumping (*Kikikaikai* is far more fun). Two-player co-operative games spice things up a little, but then they also tend to make things even easier still.

Sadly, then, despite its great strengths, this isn't a game I can wholeheartedly recommend. If ultra cute games are your bag, and you can exercise enough self discipline to only play *Pop'n Twin Bee* on the harder difficulty settings, then yes, this is a good buy – maybe even a great one. It's certainly good fun for the first few hours. If you're like most people, however, you'll probably think there just ain't quite enough here. It seems that Konami *can* make the odd mistake – even if it ain't a complete one.

So why the reasonably high mark then? Well, as far as most shoot-'em-ups go, this is still a good example and an exceptionally well-crafted game in its own right. As it stands, though, I found it a little too basic in the gameplay department and I'd recommend you try it before you buy.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
95%	85%	82%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	84%
72%		

VERDICT: A great looking shoot-'em-up – with imaginative backdrops and absolutely gorgeous sprites. Like *Axelay* (another Konami game) it features some, but not really enough, enjoyable gameplay, but ultimately lacks fast-paced excitement and, on the easy levels at least, challenge. We defy anyone to resist its appeal, though.

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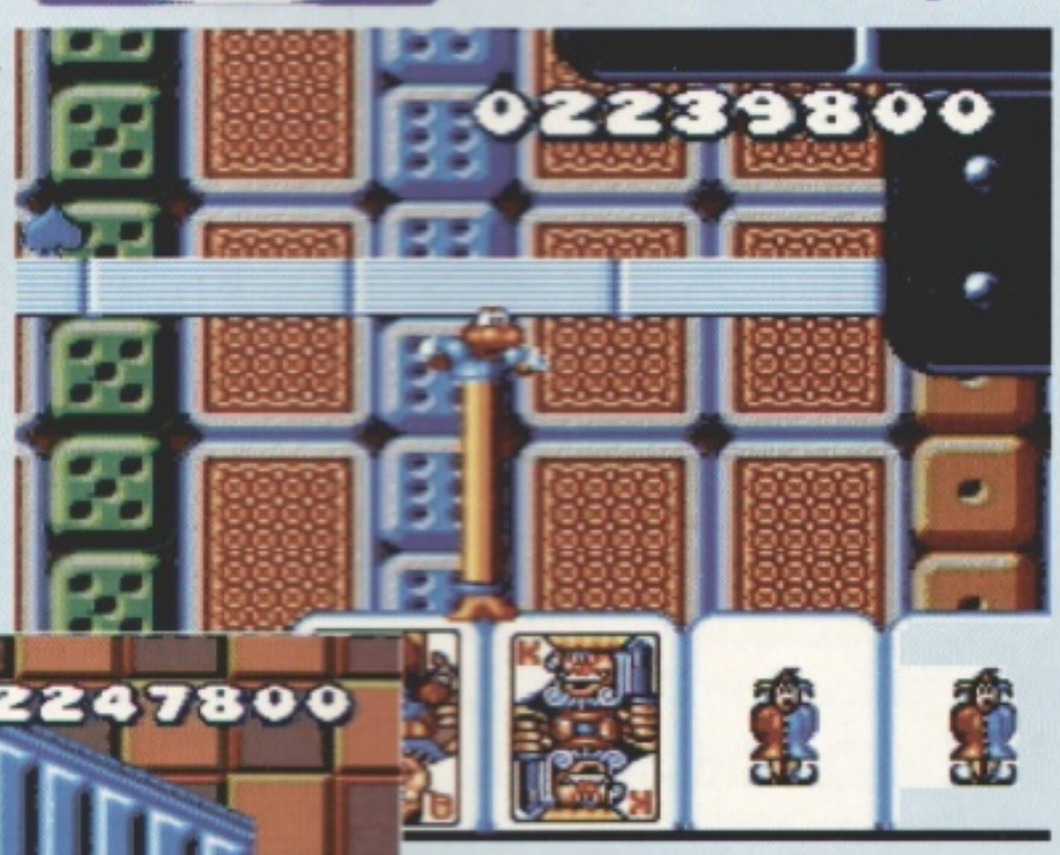
SUPER JAMES POND

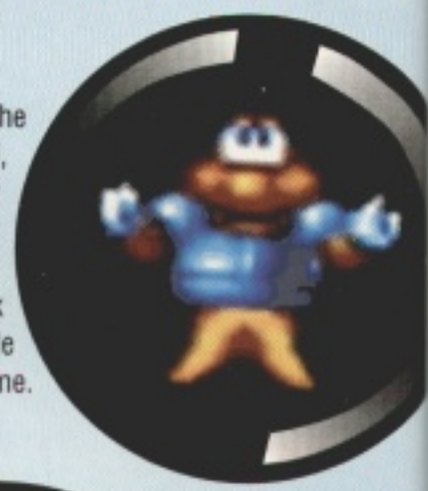
So what's it all about then, eh? Well, *Super James Pond* is a huge platform game that's come to us via the Amiga and the Mega Drive. You might have read our preview in issue 5. So is this the best version yet? We've a feeling it might be, so let's find trout for sure. Er, find out for shore. (Oh no.)

Super James Pond started life as an Amiga game – it was a (largely successful) attempt to give the Amiga something to rival the Mega Drive's *Sonic The Hedgehog*. But (and this is where things get horribly confusing) it's *not* actually a conversion of the Amiga's *James Pond*. Oh, no. It's actually based on *James Pond*'s much more exciting sequel, *Robocod*. That's why James, its star, is wearing shiny armour.



James can expect to find himself in many an odd situation. Hake-an't leave the level until he's collected a specific number of penguins.

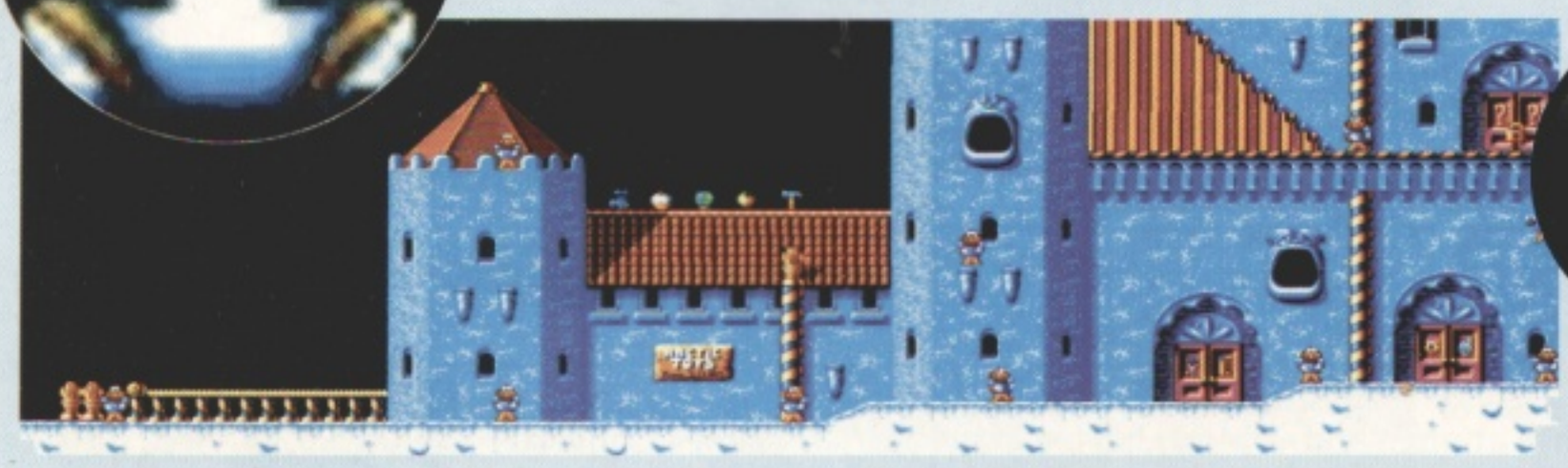
Like every platform game worth... well, like every platform game, *Super James Pond*'s got a train level. (We haven't bothered to show the slippery ice world.)



James Pond: the t-winkle-y eyed, chubb-y cheeked hero of the Amiga's tench-mark con-sole-style sprat-form game.

If, perch-ance, James comes across a platform too high for him to jump onto, he can extend his body, like a telescope.

H-eel then be able to grab hold of the platform and haul himself up.



At the centre of the game is this big castle, with doors leading off to all the levels. We were going to show you the whole castle by joining lots of screens together and, indeed, we made a pretty good go of it, but, well, it *is* awfully big and, um... (Sorry.)

Being a fish, he can swim, too. (Sometimes.)

And fly – if he manages to find himself a set of wings.

UK Release

Game: Super James Pond
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: Millenium
Price: Approx. £45
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

SHHHHH! DON'T TELL

If you're really floundering, you might want to consider the initial letters of those objects there.

Anagram fans should have a look at these ones, too.

The backgrounds are really, really great. This is Lisa's favourite one. (The big girl's blouse...)

It's the big top! (*Oo-er – Ed.*) Watch out for mutant clowns and elephants. Probably.

Oh no! And things were looking so rosy until we got to this level. It's one of those really annoying ones where you've got to spend hours climbing from platform to platform up the screen only to slip and have to start ALL OVER AGAIN.

But look again! No, really hard – down at the bottom of the screen. There you'll find a pair of wings. Pick them up and James can simply fly up to the top of the level, cutting out all the hassle. Much easier! (It took Sue to spot them, though.)

James' party trick involves stretching up – quite literally – to those hard-to-reach platforms.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

One of the most noticeable features of *Super James Pond*, when you put it alongside purpose-built SNES platform games like *Super Mario World*, is that the levels are all huge and sprawling, with large, empty spaces all over the place. This isn't a problem *per se* – you just have to walk a bit further to find the next piece of action – but it *does* mean that a) our screenshots aren't going to look very exciting, and b) you only get to see a tiny bit of the playing area at any one time. And, thanks to some daft level-designing, you often find that the platform you're meant to be jumping onto next has actually sprawled right off the screen, so you can't see it. The problem is exacerbated by a 'quirk' in the game which causes *Super James Pond* to spend an awful lot of time hanging around at the far left-hand side of the screen, so if you're trying to jump onto a platform to the left you can't actually see it at all, even if it's only a matter of pixels away. So, expect lots of fatal plummets and some vexed wringing of hands.

Super James Pond's other main problem is slow-down. It seems to happen all the time, really badly, even if there's practically nothing happening on the screen at all, and I really can't see any excuse for it. Slapped wrists all round there, then, and lots of lost marks.

But that's about it as far as complaints are concerned. It's difficult for the *Super James Pond* player to escape the fact that he's playing a converted Amiga game with some nice backgrounds slotted in. But that really doesn't matter, as it's jolly good fun, just like the Amiga version. And those backgrounds *are* nice – albeit in an abstract sort of a way. What the game lacks in neat details (of the sort games like *Mario World* and *Dinosaurs* abound in) it makes up for with big, bold, colourful shapes, slick scrolling and whistle-along-to-able tunes.

Super James Pond is a cheerful, smiley sort of a game. If it wasn't any good, I'd have a real job bringing myself to say so. But it is, so that's okay. You *do* get infinite continues (you didn't with the Amiga version), so it's one of those games you could complete in your first sitting unless you manage to discipline yourself into saying 'No!' every so often. But even if you can't, it'll still take you ages to play through, as there are loads of levels and loads of difficult bits.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
88%	70%	76%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
85%		79%

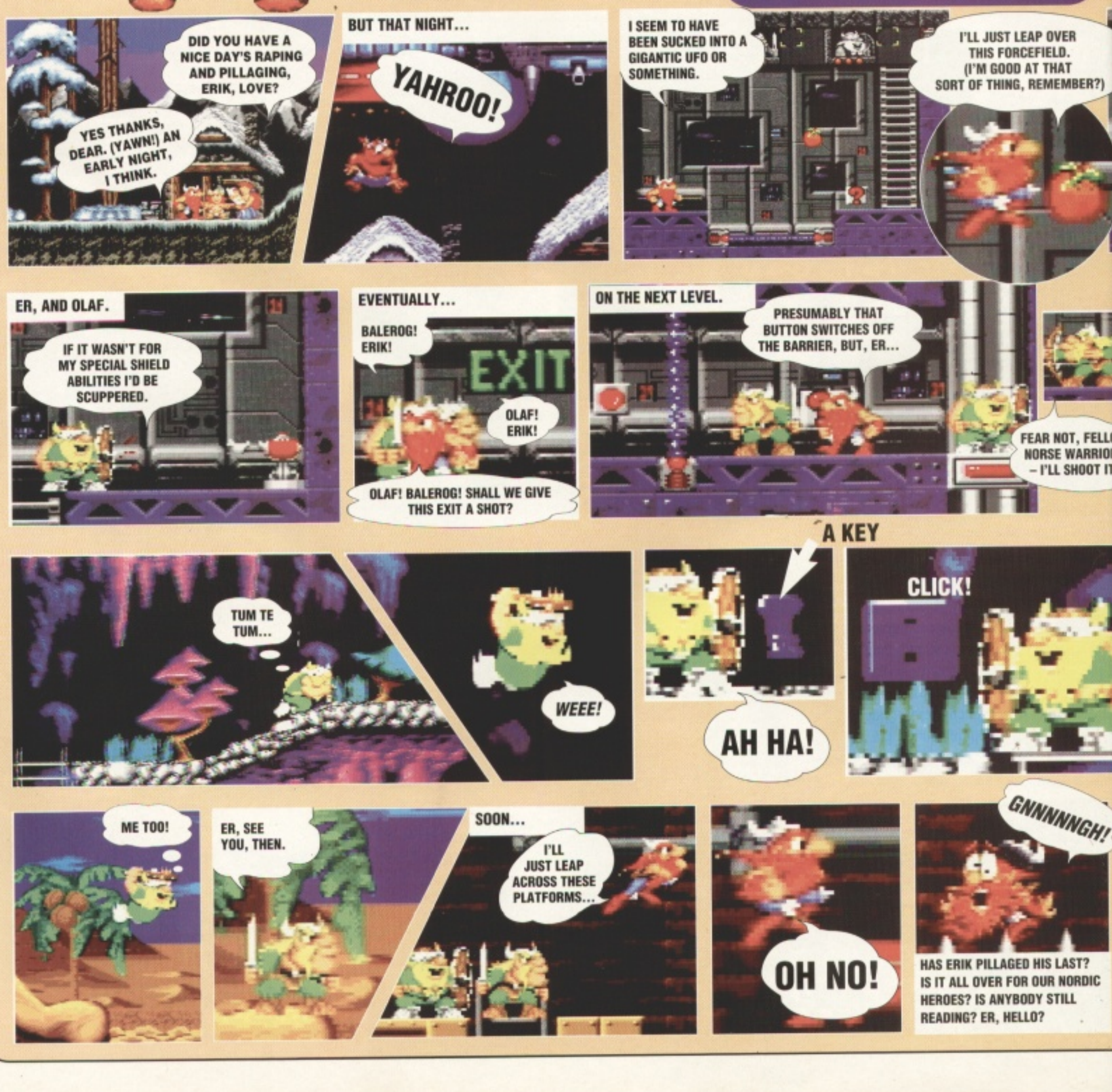
VERDICT: **The transition from Amiga to Super NES is a journey fraught with perils, but *Super James Pond* has managed it just swimmingly.**

THE LOST VIKINGS

The Vikings weren't known for being co-operative, but this game has Erik, Olaf and Baleog working together to solve puzzles.

UK Release

Game: The Lost Vikings
Publisher: Interplay
Developer: Silicon & Synapse
Price: £44.99
Release: May/June
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit


DID YOU HAVE A NICE DAY'S RAPING AND PILLAGING, ERIK, LOVE?
YES THANKS, DEAR. (YAWN!) AN EARLY NIGHT, I THINK.
BUT THAT NIGHT...
YAHROO!
I SEEM TO HAVE BEEN SUCKED INTO A GIGANTIC UFO OR SOMETHING.
I'LL JUST LEAP OVER THIS FORCEFIELD. (I'M GOOD AT THAT SORT OF THING, REMEMBER?)
ER, AND OLAF.
IF IT WASN'T FOR MY SPECIAL SHIELD ABILITIES I'D BE SCUPPERED.
EVENTUALLY...
BALEROG! ERIK!
EXIT
OLAF! ERIK!
OLAF! BALEROG! SHALL WE GIVE THIS EXIT A SHOT?
ON THE NEXT LEVEL.
PRESUMABLY THAT BUTTON SWITCHES OFF THE BARRIER, BUT, ER...
FEAR NOT, FELLOW NORSE WARRIORS – I'LL SHOOT IT.
A KEY
TUM TE TUM...
WEEE!
AH HA!
CLICK!
ME TOO!
ER, SEE YOU, THEN.
SOON...
I'LL JUST LEAP ACROSS THESE PLATFORMS...
OH NO!
GNNNNNGH!
HAS ERIK PILLAGED HIS LAST? IS IT ALL OVER FOR OUR NORDIC HEROES? IS ANYBODY STILL READING? ER, HELLO?

MEET OUR HEROES...

Meet Baleog, Erik and Olaf – The Lost Vikings. They've all got their own special abilities, and you've got to use the right combinations of each to solve the puzzles and make it through each level.

BALEOG THE BERSERKER
Berserker than who? Everyone, it seems. Balerog carries a bow and arrows and a sword, and doesn't waste time in using them. (As long as you remember to tell him to.)

ERIK THE SWIFT
He might not be the toughest of the trio, but he can run like the wind. He's also, oddly, the only Viking who can jump, making him the best choice for general reconnaissance.

OLAF THE STOUT
Olaf is, indeed, stout, and carries a shield which he can put to a surprising number of uses – a sort of hang-glider thing, a platform for his chums to stand on or, er, a shield.

FUTURE ATTRACTIONS

Coming up next in *The Lost Vikings*... (If you decide to buy the game, that is.)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

They say three heads are better than one. Or two heads. Or something. But when you're playing *The Lost Vikings*, combining the special abilities of the three Vikings to solve puzzles and get from level to level, you can't help wondering whether... whether... well, whether it mightn't have been nicer to have done away with Erik, Olaf and Baleog, and just had one Viking (called Björn, say) who had all their special abilities rolled into one. Although this would have negated the whole point of the game, and probably reduced it into another bland platform affair, it would have saved an awful lot of faffing about and speeded things up no end.

But no, we're stuck with Erik and co, and in their way they're fine. They do mean, though, that *The Lost Vikings* is a slow-paced, thoughtful sort of a game, rather than the zippy dice-'em-up Super Nintendo owners have become accustomed to.

The graphics and everything are fine. They're not exactly outstanding or anything, and there's nothing here that couldn't be done on a lesser machine like the Mega Drive or Amiga, but it's always clear what's going on and there's some really neat animation. (Some of the death sequences are particularly good, as are the little animations you get when you leave the Vikings standing around doing nothing for too long. Olaf, for example, erm, picks his nose.) The only problem in the 'graphics and everything' division is the music, which is utterly objectionable. Technically it's fine, but the tunes are awful and it's much better switched off.

And as the game's all about puzzles, it's just as well that they've all been carefully thought out and should keep you going for ages. They're varied, too – one minute you're climbing up trees in the middle of Egypt, and the next you're heaving huge blocks of metal about with a crane.

As long as you're aware that *The Lost Vikings* isn't the most exciting game around, and that you're going to have to spend a lot of time staring at the screen with your chin in your hands going 'Hmmm', you'll probably have masses and masses of fun with it. It's an infinite continues job, with passwords thrown in for good measure, but there are loads of levels and, like I said, the later ones are really quite difficult, so it should last you for ages.

● Jonathan Davies

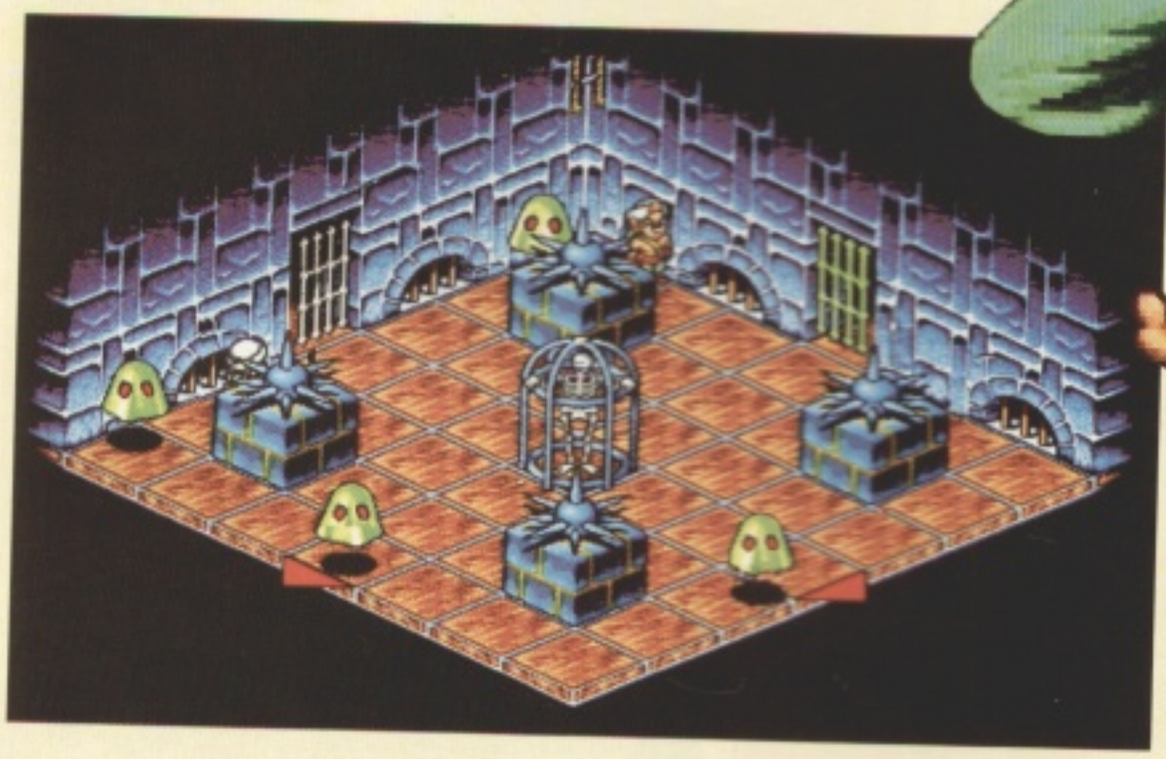
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
79%	60%	85%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
80%		84%

VERDICT: A slow, plodding game, and one which many people will hate. But if you're the puzzley sort, prepared to put in the brain-work, it's, er, Viking brilliant!

SOLSTICE

EQUI

NES owners may remember the isometric classic *Solstice* from a few years ago. Well, now the follow up is here, and it's on the Super NES. If it's a quality arcade adventure you're after, take a look at this...



Okay, here's the plot: Glendaal is the son of the original NES wizard hero, Shadax, and he's got to rescue his dad who's been kidnapped and imprisoned in a dungeon by a sorceress called... Sonia. *Sonia*? Left: The first room in the first dungeon. The arrows at either side indicate the exits.

BITS 'N' PIECES

Completely fab Mode 7 rotation scrolls the main map around – this looks *gorgeous*.

To get some extra magic, kill these trolls and bat monsters.

FIRST STEPS

This is Galedonia, the first of eight lands. Each one has its own dungeon with about three different entrances, and the game can be saved by exiting from any of these. Once the boss of a particular land has been dealt with, you can cross over to the next land. The dungeons get bigger and more complex as you go through the game.

Each dungeon has a new weapon for you. 'Is this a dagger I see before me?'

Run! Glendaal's being chased!

Eight spells can be picked up along the way. This is the healing spell. Others include freezing enemies, unlocking any door and revealing invisible blocks spells.

Bone Head here is the first of the dungeon bosses.

Right: Deeso, the second land, introduces moveable blocks to help you cross over spikes and so on. The sound effect is brilliant – just like a ton of stone being pushed across the floor of an empty cavern.

That Bullworker paid off – Glendaal can push two blocks at once on level two.

Right: A Playpeople reject? Below: Just before the second boss, Dung Dung. Below right: It's... Dung Dung!

NOX

US/UK Release

Game: Solstice II Equinox
Publisher: Sony Imagesoft
Developer: Software Creations
Price: £TBA
Release: UK: TBA/US: TBA/Jap: July
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit + BB

Optical illusions ahoy! There're a few bits of guesswork involved at some points as to where the platforms actually *are*...

NOW WHAT?

Each dungeon requires 12 of these tokens to be collected.
Is this gate the way to collect that token?
Give these spikes plenty of room to breathe.
This ghost wants to kill you badly. So, get him first.

That block on the left is moving around you. You've got to push it off the edge while it's in motion.

It's boss number three, a totem pole-type thing that should be destroyed bit by bit, as it chases you around.

On the surface, the fourth land, Athena, is basically a load of wooden platforms above water. But...

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

I never actually had a Spectrum (yes, it's admission time), so I missed out on the 'golden age' of isometric games – things like *Knight Lore* and *Head Over Heels* et al. Then again, back then (I was around 17, I guess) I was far too busy chasing girls to bother with computer games. They were just something my little brother and his spotty mates did in the attic. Who would have thought that I'd be looking back now, wishing I'd spent a little more of my misspent youth up there with them, sharing in the delights of those monochrome classics?

Yes, it's a bit sad, I know, but *Solstice II* got me in the mood so much that I checked out the original *Solstice* on the NES, and I enjoyed that so much I wanted to go back even further, to *Knight Lore* and so on. (JD says he might bring in his Speccy for me next week, and I can't wait.)

In the meantime, though, there's *Solstice II*. One thing you notice immediately when playing either *Solstice* game are the fabulous soundtracks, created by Software Creation's Tim Follin (who's apparently reckoned by Nintendo in Japan to be one of the best computer musicians in the world!). Tim is responsible for some of the best in-game soundtracks ever written – stuff like *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* on the C64 and Amiga, which still outshine just about anything else I can think of (and, yes, that does includes *Castlevania IV*!). With the *Solstice* games it's the combination of folky medieval music with amazingly realistic sound effects that weaves the magic, making for one of the most engaging, atmospheric soundtracks yet heard on the Super Nintendo. If you ever needed an excuse to hook up your console up to a hi-fi, here it is. (Play this one with the volume low and you miss out on an awful lot, believe me.)

But does fabulous sound make for a good game? Well, not on its own it doesn't, but it does help. Even without the sound at all, *Solstice II* would still be a fabulous game, highlighting a kind of gameplay that hasn't really been seen on the machine before. The only niggles I have with it are the way optical illusions created by the forced perspective and poor collision detection can frustrate. The perspective means it's all too easy to try and jump onto a platform a few feet away, and instead fall onto some spikes because it was really much further away than it looked. You do get used to it (sort of) in time, but this sort of thing still niggles and *can* be extremely annoying.

As for the collision detection, spikes, baddies and other dangerous objects must be consistently given an unusually wide berth – they seem to have an invisible forcefield surrounding them that kills you should go within, erm, killing distance. Again you get used to it, but, again, it's really frustrating.

Still, this all said, you should now dismiss from your mind all my whinging. All the drawbacks I've mentioned can be compensated for with practice, leaving a polished arcade adventure with some of the most compelling, addictive and darn right challenging action I've seen in ages. Hugely recommended, especially to those who appreciate a seriously atmospheric game.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
89%	96%	89%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
90%		90%

VERDICT: If you can cope with its faults – and they are cope-able with – *Solstice II* is an extremely enjoyable arcade adventure with lovely graphics, *brilliant* sound and some progressively involving and addictive gameplay. Highly recommended.

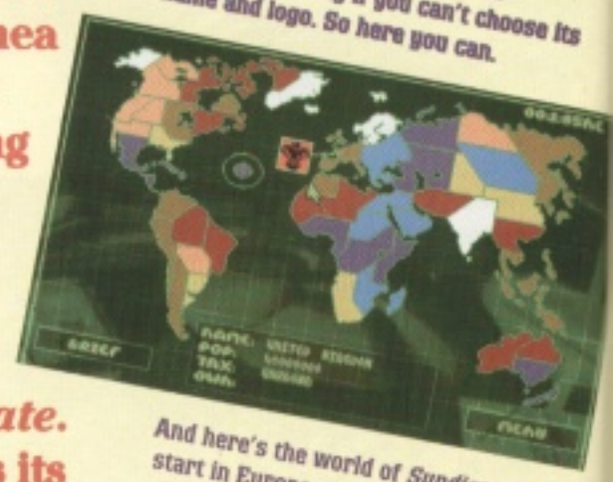
HOW DO YOU ANYWAY?

Peter Molyneux, head of Bullfrog, and the brains behind *Syndicate*.

WE FOLLOW A 'BIG NAME' RELEASE FROM FIRST IDEA TO FINISHED CART TO FIND OUT

We all play games, of course, but how much do you know about where they actually come from? To get the full story, we decided to follow a new SNES game through from first idea to completion, to see if we'd got it right. Our guinea pig game: the latest from award-winning creators Bullfrog. The game? Something called *Syndicate*. This is its story.

It's not much fun running a multi-national company if you can't choose its name and logo. So here you can.



And here's the world of *Syndicate*. You start in Europe, and have to take over the globe, bit by bit. It's kinda like *Risk*.

SYNDICATE: THE GAME IN QUESTION

Before we go into the details of how a game like *Syndicate* is put together, we thought we'd better describe the finished thing – that way, you'll have a fighting chance of knowing what we're talking about when we get embroiled in the sticky details later on.

Like most Bullfrog releases, *Syndicate* uses a distinctive isometric viewpoint, and takes great pains to both create a living, breathing environment, and to give you realistic control over your characters. This time, though, the game zooms in closer on specific individuals, and is more action-based. While you couldn't exactly describe it as a shoot-'em-up, there are definite *Super Probotector*-type elements in here.

The action is set in a brilliantly-realised future world sometime next century. Assorted corporations are fighting for dominance – you control one of them, and have to try to take over the world, territory-by-territory. You do this by sending a team of up to four cyborg agents (who you control through a biochip in their heads) on missions, usually to assassinate somebody or steal something. They go where you tell them, interacting with people and objects they find, and blowing stuff up.

Beautifully-realised – and massive – 3D cities scroll every which way, and burn up a treat, as you can see.

Though your men will generally do what you tell them, you can also influence the *way* they do things by adjusting three power bars in their heads. These affect their intelligence, perception and aggression, so you can create a guy who'll use his own initiative a lot more, or one who'll blast anyone he thinks is looking at him funny. Much of the challenge relies on you juggling the best attributes to give your men.

MAKE A GAME,

THE MAKING OF A SUPER NINTENDO GAME – YOUR MONTH BY MONTH GUIDE

Who better to take us through the development of *Syndicate* than Bullfrog boss Peter Molyneux, a man who's been involved in the creation of the game since day one?

STAGE 1 – 30 MONTHS AGO

Getting in closer than Populous.

When developing a game, of course, the first thing you've got to do is think of an idea. Around the time we began *Syndicate*, we'd done *Populous*, we were working on *Powermonger*, and I was getting interested in the idea of taking similar ideas a stage further – in particular, of getting even closer to an individual character. The starting point was something like this – how do you get a game character to do *anything* you want, without making the game a text adventure? It took some thinking about.

STAGE 2 – 29 MONTHS AGO

Check the power bars on the left.

I've always thought you can only get so far sitting there, staring into space for inspiration – you need people to bounce your ideas off. Back in the old days we all used to go to a restaurant in Guildford to bash new ideas around until something stuck. (Now there're too many of us, and we tend to have special meetings instead.)

I remember the *Syndicate* meal well. It was in a restaurant called Muswell's, and we were all eating pizza. As we ate, the idea came up that most human actions can be modified by three main things – aggression, level of perception and intelligence. If your character had three changeable energy bars, one for each of these, you could control the way he'd react to any given situation. Turn his intelligence up, and he'd start working on his own initiative. Turn aggression up and his reactions would be faster, but sooner or later he'd start shooting anything that moved. We tossed all sorts of wacky ideas around, and left the restaurant with the beginnings of a game idea.

STAGE 3 – 28 MONTHS AGO

Around the time we came up with the *Syndicate* idea, we were looking for a new project for one of our programmers, a guy called Sean Cooper. He'd done an Amiga game called *Flood* for us, and fancied an action project next – a game with lots of blood and shooting in it. Not long after the meal he was assigned the project.

We knew that we wanted a very realistic background environment for our people to interact with, so the first thing Sean had to do was to get a very basic city up and running. Shortly after he started work on this, a graphic artist was assigned to help him out. He drew the initial graphics, but they weren't much like the ones you see now. The main reason for that will become clear a bit later on.

STAGE 4 – 26 MONTHS AGO

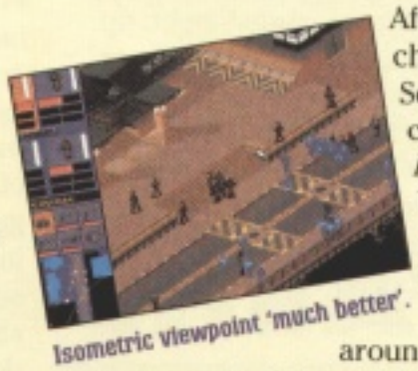
Sean's other big job, once he'd got the basic city working – it all took about two months – was to produce a routine to cover up the sprites with bits of wall and so on when they walk behind buildings. This was much more complicated than it sounds, as, for instance, you'd have to be able to still see part of the sprite if he walked behind a car or low wall or something. Basically, getting it all to work properly caused no end of problems. The eventual program he came up with we called *Coversprite*, a name that's now etched onto my memory because of all the trouble it's caused.

STAGE 4 – 25 MONTHS AGO

Shortly after Sean came up with his first version of *Coversprite*, we took a look at what we'd got and noticed one very obvious thing. Basically, the viewpoint was wrong. Initially, you see, Sean had gone with a flat-on view – the distance you are from the characters was about the same as it is in the finished game, and you were looking down on them from about the same angle, but there was a problem. You see, the buildings all stacked up in front of each other, creating massive spaces on the screen where your people could walk behind buildings and not be seen at all. Your characters could get lost behind the scenery for ages, making the game virtually unplayable.

The solution was simple – make the viewpoint isometric, and the buildings immediately became spaced, so there are only a few places where your characters disappear. Problem solved. The main reason we didn't go with this from the beginning was that we were already working on isometric projects – we'd done *Populous*, and at the time we were working on *Powermonger* – and we were beginning to get worried that people would think all our games look the same.

STAGE 5 – 24 MONTHS AGO



Isometric viewpoint 'much better'.

After we'd made the change to isometric, Sean took some of the code we'd done for *Powermonger*, butchered it a bit, and pasted it into *Syndicate*. This got little people walking around, a feeling of the passage of time and so on, into the game. We now had a living, breathing city as a backdrop for our game, with 'real' people walking about, going to work, going home again, driving cars and so on. Yes, it would still be an action game, with lots of blood, but we wanted lots of other stuff in there too. With the background virtually sorted out, we could now concentrate on the game itself.

STAGE 6 – 22 MONTHS AGO

With the background sorted, we could start thinking about the sorts of things your characters could do. The whole game at the time was based upon the three bars we'd thought up at that first meal. We now had to come up with a scenario for them to work in.

We'd decided quite early in the project that we wanted our characters to be able to use a device – we dubbed it 'the Persuadeatron' – to control the people around them. We liked the idea of our guy walking around kind of like the Pied Piper, with a crowd of people following and mimicking his actions, picking up guns and firing them when he does – stuff like that. This meant we really need a futuristic scenario, and because of – how should I put this? – some of our earlier experiences with large companies, we immediately went for the idea of setting the game in a *Blade Runner*-style world, one completely dominated by large corporations. The idea was that three great companies were running the world – one in Europe, one in America and one in Japan – until a massive corporation war broke out over a new product developed by one of them, splintering everything into much smaller power blocks. The product, we decided, was a chip that plugs into the back of your neck – it allowed people to run programs to make every day look sunny to them, or to make every girl you see in the street look like Kim Basinger. It was, of course, a runaway success, and everybody wanted one.

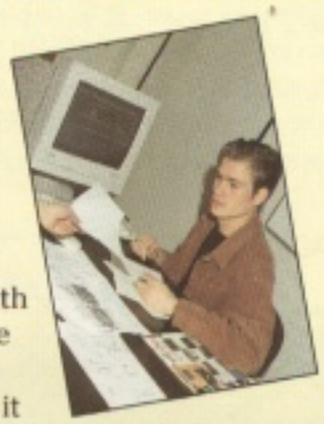
There was a dark side to the chip though. If you knew how, you could also use it to control the wearer. Once we'd got this idea, the rest fell into place. Thus, in the game, you're in charge of a European-based company, and you've got to increase your influence by taking over world territories – which you basically do by sending your team of superhuman agents on missions to (ha ha!) kill people.

STAGE 7 – 21 MONTHS AGO

Cars and stuff appear about now.

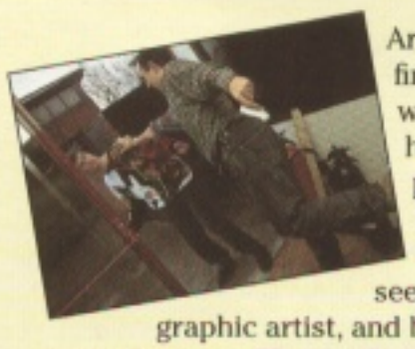
It was around now that we started finalising all the fun weapons we could put in. At one point we were planning on having grappling hooks, so our guys could climb up the outside of buildings, onto the roof, but doing that just became too complicated – we would have had to make sure you could climb up anything that a real person with a grappling hook would be able to climb, which meant we'd have to put a proper roof on every building. It got to be a real pain, so we dropped it. We also had a net which we were going to have you fire at people, but we chucked that out too when we realised how pointless it was. If you've got a gun, why would anyone really need a *net*?

STAGE 8 – 20 MONTHS AGO



And then the worst thing happened – we'd decided to change our development machines from Amigas to PCs, and that meant either finishing *Syndicate* off on the Amiga (which meant Sean would have to struggle on with an Amiga while everyone else was using PCs, and no doubt get very hacked off) or swap it all to PC. So we swapped it all to the PC. That meant, of course, that Sean had to write *Coversprite* all over again, and that took ages. While Sean does that again, we might as well skip eight months or so while he catches up.

STAGE 9 – 12 MONTHS AGO



Around the time Sean finally got everything working properly again, having taught himself to program a PC in the process, we had another upset. You see, we had to fire the first graphic artist, and bring two new guys onto the team. They're Paul McGlochlan and Chris Hills, and they had to redraw it all from scratch.

Still, once we'd got all that sorted, we had most of the basics of the game. Now we had to put all the details in – things like the traffic systems, power-ups, health bars and so on. We also had to tweak all the gameplay quite a bit to make it work. This is actually the most fun bit of making a game. You've got your world, and everything you do now affects the way the game plays – for better or worse.

STAGE 10 – 6 MONTHS AGO

For the last few months we've continued playtesting and polishing up everything. We put in a linking-the-computers multiplayer option, so up to eight of us can play the game at once, taking control of a different corporation – purely for playtesting purposes, you understand – and liked it so much we've left it in the finished thing. We've put lots of other great stuff in too, like a railway system. Just the other day we were playing and there was this great bit where my four agents are on the train, and someone else hijacked it with a whole bunch of people with guns at the station, and blew everyone to pieces! It was brilliant!

STAGE 11 – 1 MONTH AGO

The game's very near completion now, on PC and Amiga, with most of the game and graphics in there – but, as yet, no sound. As we hadn't the faintest idea of how to do it, we got a guy called Russell Shaw in, whose main claim to fame is that he did the sound effects on Gerry Anderson's *Terrahawks* TV show. He's working out really well, and will be doing most of our sound stuff in the future.

Paul and Chris have done a brilliant intro sequence using a tool called 3DS, which lets you create solid models on the computer, then cover them in whatever textures you want. The PC version, which will be the first one completed, should be on the streets in June.

STAGE 12 – TODAY

SNES version has *great* weapons!

The Super Nintendo conversion is now well underway, with Steve Caslin, who did the SNES *Powermonger*, taking all the stuff Sean's done, converting it to 6502, and combining it with a modified version of the Amiga graphics.

One stumbling block we've recently come across is that Nintendo won't allow the level of violence there is in the PC version of the game – they won't let us have people getting shot and lying around in pools of blood in the streets. I've a horrible feeling we're going have to make all the characters into cyborgs or androids or something, and have white blood come out of them – sort of like the artificial people in *Aliens*. It'll spoil everything a bit, but what can you do? The other thing that's currently under discussion is whether we'll have to lose a bit of the taking-over-the-world stuff in favour of emphasising the action a bit more, but I think that'd be a shame. Otherwise, it'll be exactly the same as the PC version, and should get a worldwide release around Christmas.

STAGE 13 – THIS SUMMER

Ta da! The Super Nintendo version of *Syndicate* is finished, just three years down the line from when we started it! (The damn thing's going to have to sell now, to justify all that hard work...)

***Syndicate* will get a worldwide Super Nintendo release around Christmas this year. In time, versions will appear on PC, Amiga, Mega Drive, Mega CD, Apple Macintosh and 3DO.**

How was it for you?

Assorted top games creators share their experiences of working on the Super Nintendo

ERIC MATTHEWS – The Bitmap Brothers

'The thing we've had a problem with is getting all the graphics we want onto the machine, because of the way the video RAM works – you can't have as many different blocks of graphics on screen at any one time as you can with the Amiga. You *can* have variety in the backgrounds as the game progresses, just not as much on screen at any one time, which meant us rejigging the graphics for the Super NES version of our new game, *The Chaos Engine*, for instance.

Otherwise, though, the machine is great. The sound chip is brilliant – it's got double the amount of channels we're used to, so you can have as much music and effects going at any one time as you want – not always possible on Amiga. The fact it's got so many colours is great too – on *The Chaos Engine* we're using whole different palettes for the sprites to make them stand out from the backgrounds, almost as if they're luminous. It's not impossible to get round the slow speed of the processor either. Though we've tended to find converting games to the Mega Drive easier in the past, we're taking the specifications of the SNES into account now, and enjoying it more all the time.'

● The Bitmap's *Chaos Engine* will get a worldwide release at Christmas. The team are also working on a platform game, *Ruff 'n' Tumble*, for 1994.

ROD MACK – Graftgold

'We've found it great fun to use – you can have plenty of sprites on screen, it's got a great colour palette, and the number of buttons you get on the joypads mean you can make the game very easy to control. The processor *is* slow – compared to a 68000 it's a real dog – but we haven't found it too bad. We're working on a football game at the moment, with the Super NES our lead machine, and it's proven fine for that. What else? I like the colour palette, I like Mode 7, I like the way you can have big sprites. It's a great machine.'

● Graftgold's soccer game, tentatively titled 'Graftgold Soccer', but possibly to have a licence tagged onto it, will probably be out around or just after Christmas.

NEIL JACKSON – Argonaut

'The great thing about the Super Nintendo is Mode 7, which is brilliant, and the stonking job Nintendo have made of the machine's custom hardware generally. That's what makes the machine worth using, really. On the down side, it's actually slower than a Spectrum, and stupider than a C64, so games designs, and the standard of programming, have to be really good to get past the natural limits of the machine, but the results can be well worth it. (Er... is that the sort of thing you're after?)' (*Kind of, Neil. Cheers – Ed.*)

● Argonaut have oodles of secret Super FX games on the cards...

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STARFOX SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

NINTENDO (US/JAP)

By Allan Brett
Additional tips: Julian Roche

You all know about *Starfox*, of course – the first game to use the ground-breaking Super FX chip. What you might not know, however, is how to complete it. With that in mind, here's our complete-this-issue player's guide, showing the smart way to make your way through the game. Allan Brett, the National Computer And Video Games Champion, tells all...

Starfox is divided into three sections, each being an individual version of the game in its own right. Basically, you've got the same mission in each section (defend the planet of Corneria by attacking and defeating the hostile world of Venom) which you can achieve by taking any one of three different routes. Each route is seven stages long, and though they have much in common with each other, each route is harder than the last.

THINGS TO BEAR IN MIND THROUGHOUT THE GAME

Though we've got, of course, plenty of specific tips to individual parts of the game – which we'll get to in a moment – there are also a few useful things you should keep in mind throughout *Starfox*. Like these:

● Make sure you master the barrel roll early on, and use it to get out of the path of dangerous-looking missiles and obstacles. You should find that you soon become *very* dependent on it. However, the barrel roll does have a fault. You can't safely use it where space is tight, or you may find yourself catapulted all over the place.

● If one of your team mates is being pursued by the enemy, make it your first priority to get rid of the enemy straight away, thus saving your pal's bacon. Chances are that he'll save your skin later on, even though you may not notice it.

Similarly, if one of your wingmen is chasing a baddy, make a point of helping him out and shooting that bad guy down. The sooner you do this, the sooner you'll get your wingman doing his job properly and protecting *you*! Remember too, you can damage your wingmen with your own lasers, so do your best not to hit them!

● If an object (asteroid etc) can be destroyed, make sure you shoot it right away. Nothing is more annoying than running into something you could have blasted off the face of the game a few seconds earlier.

● Learn to recognise the different types of craft you come across, and which ones yield which power-ups. You want to keep a healthy reserve of smart bombs wherever possible.

● Where you can, let the body of your ship take all the damage, safeguarding your wings. Completely losing a wing drastically increases the amount of damage you'll sustain in collisions, and your weapon will revert to the relatively feeble single shot laser.

● If an enemy ship flashes yellow when hit, destroying it will release an energy ring – very handy if you're running low.

● In the space sequences, first person perspective (with the target and pitch/yaw markers on screen) is the best way to tackle the action. It's hard to judge your proximity to other objects in the third person. Also, try and shoot in consistently horizontal lines across the screen from left to right and vice versa – many of the enemy formations fall into predictable attack patterns across the screen, and thus are easily disposed of.

● When firing smart bombs, fly to the top of the screen with your nose up before releasing them, as this will increase the distance they can travel. Either wait for them to make contact with the target, or detonate them manually within a suitable damaging distance by pressing the smart bomb a second time. If you're under attack from all angles, fire a bomb and detonate it immediately to clear the screen.

LEVEL 1

Stage 1: Corneria

For a good start, fly through the four gates on the ground that you'll come across very early on to reveal a laser power-up – it's beyond the blue structure with the sliding doors. Fly through the tunnel to collect it. Slightly further on, a single ground-based craft can be shot to reveal an extra smart bomb. Another of these can be found on the right-hand side of the two adjacent red towers.

When you encounter the clusters of thin blue towers littering the landscape, stay close to the ground to avoid being hit as they topple over – alternatively you could shoot them out of the way before you get to them. Finally, make sure you destroy the large robots – otherwise they have an annoying tendency to get in your way.

Boss: Attack Carrier

WEAPON: MISSILE BLASTER

1 Stay low at the start to avoid a collision from behind. After the boss ship has passed you and turned, fly to the right and blast its right-hand side. As the hangar door opens and the orange panels are revealed, start blasting – this section will be jettisoned, letting you concentrate on the left-hand section. As the ship thrusts back sharply, fire a smart bomb and the two left sections should be history too. In the middle bit just avoid the bullets and drone ships and blast the front or the exhaust point.

Stage 2: The Asteroid Belt

Throughout this level you'll come across a handful of dangers that are very easily-dealt with (if you know how). For a start, the snake/centipede-like creatures scatter when hit, releasing an energy ring, if you hit the blue head section. The asteroid belt itself is a piece of cake – shoot the orange asteroids and you'll have no problems (the grey ones are indestructible).

About half-way through the level you'll notice a creature jumping about on two asteroids. Shoot the droid for an energy ring, and collect the smart bomb you'll find between the two asteroids. Probably your biggest threats are the ships that teleport on-screen and fire at you, and the fish-like craft armed with very fast lasers. Make sure you destroy these before doing anything else. Your only other major problem will be the rows of asteroids. Just shoot the central one to break the link. By the way, a triangular formation of asteroids will release a power-up if all three are shot.

Boss: Rock Crusher

WEAPON: LASER

2 You'll have no problems here. The eight little laser turrets – four on each side – are your target. Use a smart bomb to destroy one set, and then – after the machine has turned to reveal the other set – use another bomb. If you have no bombs you'll just have to shoot the turrets instead. Once all eight are destroyed, the large unit on the front (the one that slides from side to side) will jettison (move left or right to dodge it) to leave the main unit vulnerable. Shoot out the centre to destroy it. Also, watch out for the missiles fired from antennae on both sides of the craft.

Stage 3: The Space Armada

Unless you're already fully powered up, you'll want to go for the power-up wielding craft that appears near the start – very handy. A little further on, a 1-up gate can be found too. Blast it a few times to reveal the extra life.

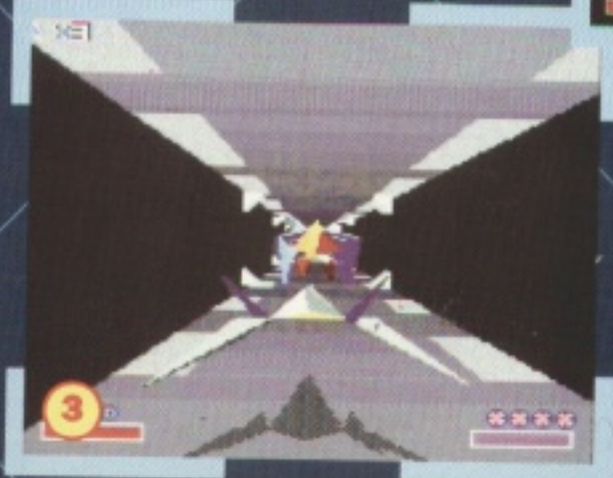
In this section a major threat to you and your team are the large battle cruisers which bombard the screen with laser fire. Shoot the rear top of each ship to render it inactive – clouds of smoke pouring from it indicate that the ship is defunct.

The stock cruisers must be entered at all costs – avoiding them will make you repeat the previous section of the level. Travelling through the main tunnel of the stock cruiser is a simple test of your piloting skills. Gates that go up or down, or gates that rise from the floor, are avoided by staying low. The yellow arrows on some doors indicate the direction in which it'll open, but watch out – they can change at the last moment. Also, get the shield and destroy the crystal at the end of the tunnel to escape unharmed. Watch out for debris as you exit.

3

Upon exiting the stock cruiser you will encounter the turrets on the side of a large craft – these should also be destroyed. Make sure you get a shield regenerator here too. The second stock cruiser presents a series of doors which will open when shot, but you shouldn't find any other problems with it. The Zeppelin-like craft you encounter outside shouldn't pose a threat either, nor should the Atomic Base stronghold's exterior defenses. However, inside the stronghold is a very different matter.

Here another tunnel presents itself, and a new set of gates occur bringing certain death to the trigger happy. These gates change the direction in which they rise if you shoot them (they'll open at the last second, so don't panic). Carry on and you'll find yourself up against the boss.



Boss: Atomic Base

WEAPON: LASER

4 As the room spins, position yourself so that the laser units can be seen coming towards you. Avoid shooting the small diamond protrusions on the wall as a powerful (and psychotic) craft is released. Apart from that, shoot the laser units and blast the core.

Stage 4: Meteor

Shoot the walkers, and anything else that moves. When you reach the pillars, watch for a smart bomb and a power-up. After the pillars have gone, a large rock will appear from nowhere. A barrel roll should help you here, but watch out for other rocks. Loads of rocks, walkers and helicopters (easily disposed of) now appear. Look out for a 1-up gate too.

5 After the gate you'll come across a hangar concealing three enemies – shoot these and you'll find another hanger which'll open if you shut the door. Shoot the door at the last second and go through to find a shield regenerator.

Further on, a heavily armoured craft appears. After you've blown it up, two adjacent hangers show up – the right one hides nothing, but a smart bomb lies behind the left one. Another armoured craft appears, followed by the boss.

Boss: Dancing Insector

WEAPON: FIRE BLASTER

6 Blast the legs and body of the beast to make it fall down, and do this again if it gets back up. When it collapses for a second time, its legs will turn red, and you can blow them up. Get rid of the legs quickly, and check the altitude of the boss as it spins towards you so that you don't get killed. The boss' main weapon – the fire blaster – is crap, and it's easy to avoid the bursts it fires at you.

Stage 5: Venom Space Battle

No real advice for this level, except two small points. The rockets which constantly bombard you should always be dealt with first or you will not last very long at all.

The other main point is to watch out for the shielded craft – these are temporarily invulnerable, highly manoeuvrable and extremely deadly. Destroy these as quickly as possible. As for the rest of the level, it's a fairly high-speed blasting affair. Firing in a straight line across the horizon of the planet is the way to go for most of it.

Boss: Phantron

WEAPON: LASER

This boss attacks in two phases.

7 The first phase is simple – develop a left/right movement and, as the Phantron zips left or right when hit, you'll hit him again. In phase two, however, the Phantron produces two holograms of itself. Find the vulnerable one and start blasting. If it should regroup, find the real one again and blast away. Eventually it splits for the planet's surface.

Stage 6: Venom Planet

As you're nearing the end of this level, we don't want to give *too* much away. There are, however, a couple of things to watch out for. For a start there are a couple of arrowed gates which open out in front of you – the arrow indicates in which direction they will open, and you can shoot the arrow to change it if you want. There are yellow arrows on some brown blocks which indicate the way they swing towards you but, as before, this can change at the last minute. The orange columns follow you (!), so keep steering left and right immediately you get past them to avoid damage.

The other big dangers are the blocks and tiles suspended in mid-air. These'll try to drop on top of you if you fly low, and flip in an attempt to block your path if you fly towards them.

Boss: Phantron (again!)

WEAPON: LASER

8 Again, the Phantron attacks in two phases. The first phase is similar to the second one you coped with on the last stage, but its second incarnation is more difficult. This version of Phantron will transform into a spider-type thing that will jump about shooting missiles and lasers. You'll find that hitting it is quite hard – it is only vulnerable to head on attacks – but you really must destroy it quickly if you want to stay healthy. (Let it live too long, you see, and it jettisons its legs, which are fast, and have a good chance of killing you.)

Final Boss: Andorf

WEAPON: TELEKINESIS

9 The final tunnel, which runs towards Andorf's stronghold, is a real test of skill. However, once you've got through far enough to face Andorf himself, he's actually quite easy. He appears in the form of a giant face – keep your lasers trained on his eyes (they're vulnerable when they're blue), and the tiles that spew from his mouth will miss you. However, you'll need to take more care when the tiles appear from his eyes. Don't panic when he sucks all the tiles back into his mouth, though – you can't be harmed at this point. Once both eyes are destroyed the face will break away and a cube is

10 revealed. Blast it to pieces (the face may return if you don't do it fast enough, so just keep firing) and that's it – you've finished the game. Now, are you ready to try level two?

LEVEL 2

Stage 1: Corneria

Obtain a power-up by flying through the gates. When you see the hangar, use your retro rockets just before you reach it to avoid smashing into the hangar door. A bit further on a craft will appear that'll drop little droids by parachute – destroy this fast, because the droids can be a pain in the neck (a smart bomb fired from the top of the screen should do it). Just past the half-way mark you'll find some more gates – fly through them to reveal a smart bomb. Just after this bit you'll fly by some of the toppling blue pillars – stay low to avoid these (some are hidden behind larger buildings, so keep your eyes open). Near the end a smart bomb can be obtained by banking your craft and flying through the gap between the two buildings.

Boss: Attack Carrier

WEAPON: MISSILE BLASTER

1 The same as the Missile Carrier at this stage on the first level.

Stage 2: Sector X

As you reach two sets of horizontal girders, fly between them, then look out for a 1-up gate behind a spinning girder. When you reach a sort of corridor made up of vertical girders, fly down it to reach another corridor made of parallel spinning girders. Go to the extreme left or right to avoid harm, or fly down the corridor to get a smart bomb. Further on a power-up ship can be found. Blast it and collect the icon it leaves behind.

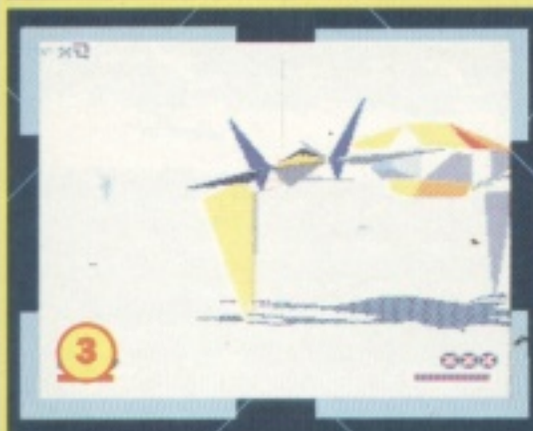
Get rid of the teleporting ships and, as you reach another space structure, look out for a smart bomb and then a shield. Now a shield regenerator appears, followed by some armoured spaceships. Wait till they turn before you shoot.

The final part of this level involves negotiating a series of free moving girders. Only your reflexes, skill and judgement will get you through. Constantly shooting is also a good move.

Boss: Rock Crusher

Weapon: Laser

2 The same as the boss at the end of the Asteroid Belt on level one.



Stage 3: Titania

3 You shouldn't have any problems negotiating the rocks at the start, but – as you exit – things get harder. Watch out for the crystals that fly aimlessly about. And look out for three hangars that appear now and again. The left hangar hides a baddy, the middle one hides a power-up and the right one conceals the weather generator. Shoot

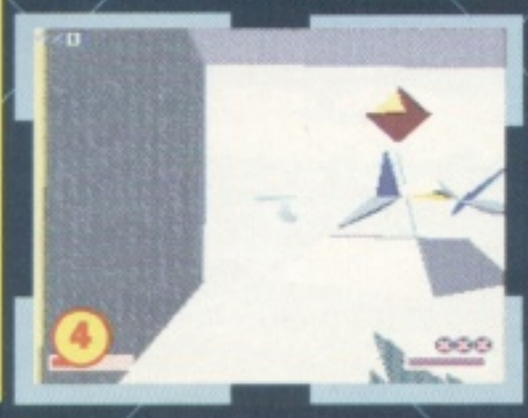
4 the hangar doors to temporarily open them. Until you fly through the weather generator (ie the right-hand door), the previous part of the level is repeated. Once the weather generator is

5 deactivated, the scenery changes but the obstacles remain the same.

Boss: Professor Hangar

WEAPON: SHADOW THRUSTER

6 Destroy all the amphibious craft and Professor Hangar appears. If you're powered up he can be wasted in seconds, but, if not, careful use of smart bombs and evasive action can sort him too. Kill the Prof before he uses his main weapon, as it's very deadly indeed.



Stage 4: Sector Y

7 In this sort of galactic aquarium you'll come across lots of dangerous stuff. For instance, there's the field of electrical pulses (or blue jellyfish – it's sort of hard to tell). If one gets stuck to you, pull a barrel roll or two to shake it off. There's a 1-up gate here to be watched out for too.

Further on things get much more dangerous, with deadly mantra ray-type things making an appearance. The red ones should be shot to stop them colliding with you, but leave the blue ones alone if at all possible – shooting them simply sends them into an attack frenzy. There's a power-up craft lingering about in this section too, so keep a sharp eye out for it.

Just before the boss appears, an enormous 8 whale arrives which, if shot, will drop, amongst other things, power-ups, a shield regenerator, smart bombs and a shield. Magic!

Boss: Plasma Hydra

WEAPON: PLASMA SPEWER

9 This monster has huge arms which it'll use to thrash you. Your first task should be to shoot out the claws at the end of each arm. As the claws come away, a new one will appear, but the arms get progressively shorter. Eventually they'll fall off altogether and a new arm will grow at the back. Here it's very important that you kill the beast as quickly as possible before the mace appears at the end of the new arm – if you give it a chance to get the mace you 10 could find yourself in serious trouble. However, provided you make way for the volley of missiles and keep blasting you should be okay.

Stage 5: Venom Space Battle

The key point to remember here is that all the baddies attack in groups, which means you'll have to waste them as quickly as you can. As on all of the first Venom stages, the rapid laser craft make another appearance (big, red and orange), but these should pose little threat as they're deceptively simple to destroy. Watch out again for the rockets launched from the planet surface, and also the exploding shrapnel bombs.

As you near the end of the level, keep your eyes peeled for an orange wire-frame ship. Its destruction will release a handy shield.

Boss: Metal Smasher

WEAPON: CRUSH ATTACK

11 The attacks of the Metal Smasher are simple but deadly. Your ship will withstand only two rush attacks before it explodes. If the boss tries to crush you by coming either above or below you, use your barrel rolls just as the boss goes out of view and it should miss you. If it positions itself to the side of you, use your retro rockets as it leaves the screen for similar effect.

The lasers and shrapnel bombs should prove easy to avoid, and provided you don't get crushed you'll be fine. Remember to concentrate your attacks on one half of the boss to destroy it quicker than usual.

Stage 6: Venon Corridor

Again, I don't think I should give the complete game away here, so near to the end of this level – but I *will* toss a couple of handy hints your way just to give you a fighting chance. For a start, stay on the solid road on the right to avoid the laser mines dropped by the other ships. (The little ground-based vehicles with yellow turrets contain shield power-ups.) Use your banking ability to make negotiating obstacles a little easier.

Don't worry yourself too much about the air bikers themselves – they're pretty useless. Shoot them as soon as possible, but keep most of your concentration on the boss itself.

Boss: Galactic Rider

WEAPON: AIR BIKERS

12 When the boss opens up to launch the air bikes, shoot the inside part (a smart bomb works wonders here). Once the boss closes up, stay out of its way and wait until it opens again. The boss will copy your movements, so fire your forward engines a couple of times to get it to go forward too (ie get out of your way). Be ready to slow your engines immediately in case it wants to swap sides of the screen though!

Final Boss: Andorf

WEAPON: TELEKINESIS

13 Apart from being able to take more punishment from your laser than in previous meetings, this boss acts identically to Andorf on level one.

LEVEL 3

Stage 1: Corneria

Fly through the gates at the start and, when you reach the two hangars, a power-up can be found in the left one and a smart bomb in the right one. Don't forget to use your retro rockets!

Again, look out for the blue pillars and stay low. After you're past the pillars, look for the two robots carrying a pylon-type structure. A small craft can be seen on the ground – blast it to reveal an extra smart bomb. Shortly afterwards you'll have to pilot your ship through a cluster of buildings – between two of the big ones is a cleverly hidden smart bomb. Skillful flying is needed to collect it.

After the buildings you can, if you wish, negotiate a forked corridor of gates. Go left to regenerate your shield, and right for an extra smart bomb (though I doubt you'll need the smart bomb, as you get another before the fork in the corridor). Be careful in the last section of buildings – hidden pillars attempt to crush you as you fly through.

Boss: Destructor

WEAPON: PLASMA

This bit is quite deceptively simple. Shoot the flying shells that cover the pods as they spin in front of you. After the shells are gone, shoot the three little cockpit pods and the boss is history.

Stage 2: The Asteroid Belt

The first thing you'll come across of any significance is a triangular formation of red asteroids. It's quite hard to spot amongst all the other rocks, but go for it anyway – a smart bomb is up for grabs if you manage to destroy it.

Seconds later you'll be hounded by a couple of teleporter ships (there's a power-up ship to be found around here too), followed by a section that's mainly asteroids and plasma bombs. Two large asteroids mark the half-way point, and here you can top up on shield energy. After this bit look for the large space structure, as a 1-up gate's just past it.

As you approach the end of the level things get tougher, with the nasty limpet ships being particularly dangerous – never shoot one head on, unless you like the taste of asteroid! Your other problem will be the asteroids with faces on. These home in on you, so watch out! A smart bomb lurks in this area, but you may be too busy being shot at to get it.

Boss: Blade Barrier

WEAPON: WEB ATTACK

Should you get caught in the web this boss puts out, try a barrel roll or two. These should get you out with ease. The big problem is that your shots can get deflected back towards you, so don't shoot till the blade stops spinning! The six blue extensions behind the blade are your target. The blade comes towards you when you've destroyed it, so make sure you're ready to avoid it.

Stage 3: Fortuna

The first section is easy enough, as long as you concentrate on killing the wasps and deterring the dragonflies. Look for a shield regenerator at the end of this section.

Once you're flying over the water, keep shooting the flying fish, but divert your attacks to the ducks when they appear. The serpents are no threat, provided you blast their heads off – look out for a shield in this area of the stage while you do it.

When you're back over terra firma, look for another power-up – but watch out for the little ground craft! These can be a real pain, appearing, as they do, amongst all the plants and flowers.

Boss: Monarch Dodora

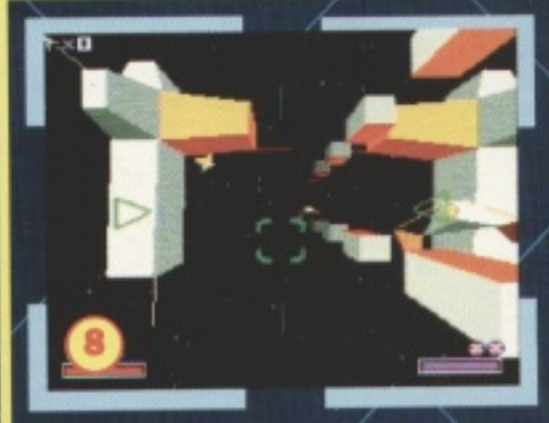
WEAPON: FIRE BREATH

When this baddy first puts in an appearance, stay in the bottom right corner – you'll be safe there until it retreats. The monster is only vulnerable when it's facing you, but before you can damage it you must push its head into its body – after which you can give it a right pasting. A smart bomb closely followed by a stream of laser fire can sometimes kill this beast in seconds, but more often it'll stay alive a little longer. The birds released from the monster's eggs are useless, and avoiding them is really easy. Be careful about getting too clever so close to the end of the game – you don't want to muck it all up now.

Stage 4: Sector Z

Throughout this level you'll be hounded by flying girders and other objects, so keep your eyes peeled. When you first come across the girders, look out for the smart bomb to help you on your way. After this – and, indeed, throughout the level – you'll encounter grey spinning girders with a blue arrow at each end. By shooting these arrows you can speed up, slow down or even stop the girder's movements.

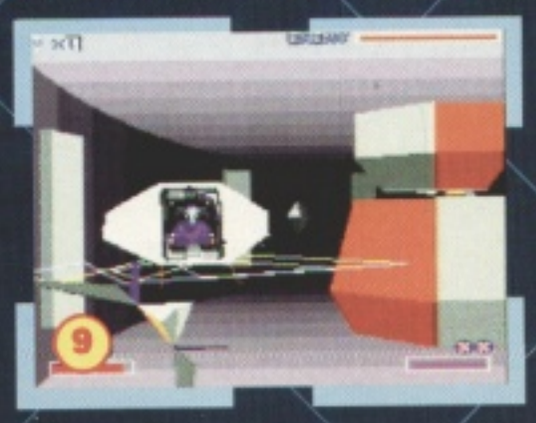
A little further on a power-up can be found behind a wall of girders (while you're negotiating a sequence of spinning girders). Beyond this you come across some large structures with rows of blocks stretching into the distance – stay low and you'll avoid most of the flack. Beyond this, there are no particular points to note before you reach the space station at the end, just keep your eyes open.



Boss: Atomic Base 2

WEAPON: LASER

Don't worry about the tunnel – the obstacles here should be familiar. However, the boss is tough. While the laser turrets of the first Atomic Base could be blown up, on this one they can only be temporarily disabled. The kamikaze craft are more frequent too, so kill them quickly. Also, the second core only stays open for a few seconds before closing up again – so work fast with those lasers and smart bombs!



Stage 5: Macbeth

10 Get the smart bomb at the start, then watch for hidden enemies as you negotiate the rock canyon. At the point where you can see a set of buildings in a row, a walker will appear between two of them – shoot him and use a barrel roll to find a power-up where he was hiding.

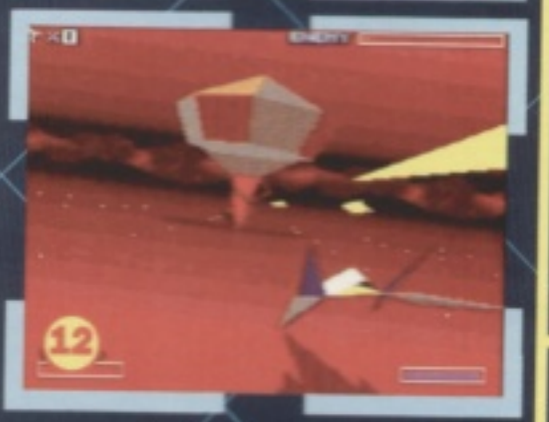
The only other things you really have to watch out for are the volcanoes and anything stuck onto the ceiling. These last should be shot before anything you come across on the ground, as they seem to usually have a better aim and are thus more dangerous.

Boss: Spinning Core

WEAPON: LASER

11 Once the smoke and flames have disappeared, shoot the yellow-tipped segments. If you're low on shield energy, blasting the missiles can sometimes release an energy ring. Once all the segments are destroyed, the upper section

12 will open to reveal this boss's weak spot – it's the area above the big point, and will take careful shooting to hit. However, getting it ain't easy – for a start, the ship will turn upside down and four balls will start flying about (these are, it goes without saying, to be avoided at all cost). You're going to have to dodge the lasers and missiles too, of course, but this shouldn't be too hard (as long as you don't fly into one of the balls in the process, that is!)



Stage 6: Venom Atmosphere

13 Again, this level is practically the same as the other 'above the planet' Venom stages. The only things to look out for are the cluster of pick-ups lying past a circle of 'mings' (orange ball thingies) – these consist of a power-up, a smart bomb and (yes!) a shield. A shield regenerator can be found a little further on too.

As far as enemies are concerned, only the rockets from the planet's surface, the spinning top-type ships and the shielded ships are really major threats.

Boss: Great Commander

WEAPON: LASER

This is probably the hardest boss of the game – it's a complete git, and I hate it! Here's what happens:

As the sections fly about at the start, shooting is useless. Just stay at the bottom right corner to avoid the lasers and mines that are fired at you. The real trouble starts when the three

14 sections come together. You'll notice six little (very little) turrets on the wings which occasionally open up to shoot you. When the turrets are open they're vulnerable to your shots, but pin-point accuracy is required to destroy them. One good way to destroy this boss is to shoot off all the turrets on the left-hand side – after this a few well-timed smart bombs should dispose of the ones on the right too. Doing things in this order tends to work well, as the top part of the ship starts firing at you when the three turrets are destroyed, while the remaining ones are all so close together you can take them all out with the one smart bomb.

Stage 7: Venom Surface

15 The moving pillars at the start are easily destroyed by flying high and straight through the middle. Only the still pillar at the end needs to be avoided. However, the blocks and tiles can be a problem. Once you've worked out how to manipulate them (something I can't really describe here – you'll know how to do it when you see them) it's possible to breeze through. Don't forget to collect the shield you can get here!

The flying red pillars are easy to avoid if you stay low, as this makes your viewing range better and buys you a little time. By now you should be used to the flipper gates, and by directing them properly you may be able to pick up a power-up too. However, one thing you won't have seen are the blue arrowed flipper gates which constantly change direction. By shooting the arrow you can fix a direction for the gate to flip.

Boss: Great Commander

WEAPON: IRON BALLS

16 Once the ship has turned into a robot you should instantly let rip on the lower section, which opens and closes. You must destroy this fast, as the iron balls begin to be released en masse if you take your time. If you destroy this section, phase two kicks in – the top section starts circling the middle section, which releases a nasty spinning top-type craft. Colliding with this means heavy shield damage. Keep calm, and concentrate your fire on the top section, and you should be OK.

Final Boss: Andorf

WEAPON: TELEKINESIS

The tunnel leading to Andorf's lair is rock hard – it must be one of the game's toughest sections. However, if you *do* get through this, you'll get to take on Andorf himself. He initially takes the same form as in level one and two, and adopts the same attack patterns as well. However, should you destroy the face to reveal the cube you'll notice that

17 when the face comes together again it'll mutate into a sort of demon's head instead. The difference here being that the eyes now shoot bolts of plasma instead of tiles, and the face doesn't need to recover the tiles it releases – it's just a continuous stream. Surprisingly this isn't quite as bad as it sounds, and blowing up the cube shouldn't take too much doing.

18 Well done! You've finished *Starfox* on its hardest difficulty level!

Starfox: Secret Levels!

Like all the best games, *Starfox* has a few hidden bits to it that you'll only find by luck or very concentrated searching. Or reading on...

The Black Hole

You must first get to the Asteroid Belt on level one. Remember the five asteroids in a row, with an orange one in the centre? Crash through the orange one, or shoot it at the very last second. Do this with all three rows and an asteroid with a face on it appears – fly into it to reach the black hole.

Out of this dimension

Go to the asteroid belt on level three. Keep shooting the second large asteroid and it'll explode. An egg will fly out, and a bird comes out of the egg – fly into the bird to get out of this dimension. (Three identical symbols on the fruit machine

1 will end the game.)

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DRIVING GAMES SPECIAL!

BURN RUBBER!

OVER THE NEXT FIVE PAGES, FOUR NEW DRIVING GAMES GO UP AGAINST THE CURRENT CHAMPIONS. DO ANY OF THEM MAKE THE GRADE?

After a period of relative inaction, this month sees the launch of a number of new driving games on the Super Nintendo, each one hoping to take the currently vacant position of undisputed 'best driving game'. (The great *Super Mario Kart* sits above all others in something of a category of its own at the moment, and can't really be usefully compared to more 'realistic' Grand Prix-based rivals. Sorry.)

Over the next few pages we review four of the new pretenders to the title – do any of them stand head-and-shoulders above what's gone before? Or (depressing thought) are we *still* looking for the definitive Super Nintendo Formula One sim? You only have to turn over the pages to see...

THE BEST (so far): Super Play's current benchmark driving games

Before we check out the new releases, what's the standard that they have to go up against? To give you some sort of context for what follows, we've picked what we feel are currently the best driving games in every conceivable category. You may not agree with us 100% (so far most releases have been so much of a muchness that personal preference comes into play quite a bit), but they should give you some sort of impression of what these new boys are aiming to beat...

Best Formula One game

Human Grand Prix
(Human)

Still not officially available in this country, *Human Grand Prix* beats other attempts at depicting the cut-and-thrust world of F1 racing (things like *F1 Exhaust Heat*, *Suzuki F1* and *Super F1 Circus*) by the inclusion of a neat split screen two-player mode, good believable graphics and the use of a viewpoint that allows you to see the corners coming up properly (so unlike, say, *Suzuki F1* and most of the overhead view racing games). It's not a perfect game however – the narrow, letter-box style display area and unusual, tricky steering will put some people off. Until the perfect F1 game arrives, however, this is the best we've got.

Human Grand Prix: Due in the UK soon.

Best overhead view game

Super F1 Circus
(Nichibutsu)

Though most of these are still Formula One games, we've put them in a different category because they actually feel quite different to play. The idea is that you're looking directly down on the track, your little car buzzing around vaguely in the middle of the screen. Unfortunately, however, there hasn't yet been an overhead view driving game up to the standard of *Human Grand Prix* and its closest rivals – *Super F1 Circus* is probably the best, but it still suffers from the fact that you can't see the track ahead of you far enough to react properly to the corners. (Still, at least this one has a well-positioned course scanner there to give you a fighting chance.) No two-player option, but a nice feel and plenty of speed.

Most original driving game

F-Zero
(Nintendo)

As one of the first ever Super Nintendo releases in both this country and Japan, *F-Zero* is as much a showcase for the abilities of the machine as a game – but that doesn't stop it being incredibly playable. Futuristic racing cars zoom around fast and smooth racetracks suspended high above some sort of Mega City. And, while it doesn't really sit too comfortably with the Formula One spirit of this feature, it still sets standards that more conventional driving games have been struggling to meet ever since. *Mario Kart* may have eclipsed it a bit now, but this was the original – in the early days, the look of the game alone sold Super Nintendos by the truck-full.

Best overall driving game

Super Mario Kart
(Nintendo)

We've said it before (lots of times), and no doubt we'll say it again – *Super Mario Kart* is a superb game, packed with imagination, humour, speed, perfectly judged challenge and (incredibly rare in a driving game) variety. Like *F-Zero*, you can't really compare it with proper F1 racing games – its bizarre go kart courses and odd pick-upable weapons would make Murray Walker turn in his grave (if he was dead). But brushing all that aside, its ultra-competitive racing action and range of highly intelligent computer drivers are simply unbeatable. Undoubtably the best driving game ever.

Super Mario Kart: Perfect in every way.

NIGEL MANSELL

F1 CHALLENGE

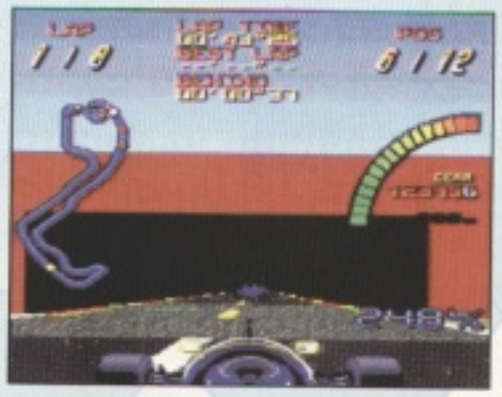
WARNING!
Import versions of this game will not work with UK machines.

This is the biggest driving game in our round-up, and not just because it's got Nigel in it – it's also by far the best. But is it the ultimate Formula One game?

Japanese Release

Game: Nigel Mansell F1 Challenge
Publisher: Gremlin Graphics
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £60-£70
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

It's hard to think of anything clever to say here, because this *Nigel Mansell* game is *exactly* as it seems – four wheels and a moustache. It's got plenty of circuits, it's got a spectacular spinning globe on the bit where you select the courses, it's got plenty of speed, and it's got easily the best-looking, smoothest driving feel of any game of the type we've seen, on just about any system. Yet, despite all this, all the Japanese mags have given it average marks. Is there something going wrong here we hadn't realised?



Tunnels? *Nigel*'s got lots of them. If you don't believe us, take a look at this picture. It's of a tunnel. In *Nigel Mansell*.

And here we are emerging again. Unfortunately the only Formula One courses in the world with tunnels are Monaco and Japan, so Nigel sticks in a few extra bridges on the other courses to compensate.

Various sorts of terrain? *Nigel*'s got 'em. Here we're driving round a deserty South African circuit. We're also going up a hill, so you can't see the horizon.

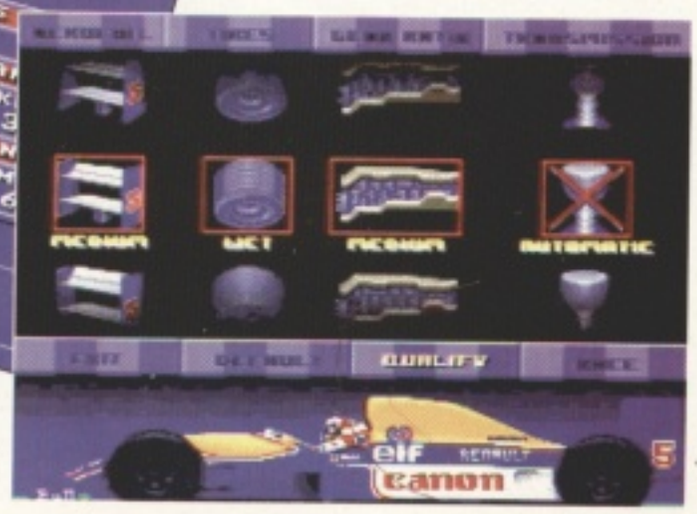
Rain? Yup – there's lots of that. You'll have to 'pit in' and get your 'slicks' changed for 'wets' if you run into any.

GETTING STARTED IN FORMULA ONE: Top tips from the man of the moment – Nigel Mansell

'First you need to choose the track you want to race on from all the circuits on this globe and Monaco is a good one because it has got a long interesting tunnel or Japan is good or Australia because me and Mrs Mansell went to Australia for our holidays last year and it was really hot and–' (*Snip! – Ed.*)

'It is a good idea to have a look at the map to see where all the corners are otherwise you will not know where they are and you might crash and also look to see what the weather is like and then you will know what sort of tyres to put on your car and whether to wear a vest or a jumper or–' (*Snip! – Ed.*)

'You can change the tyres on your car and you can change the gear ratio on your car and you can change the aerofoil on your car and you can qualify if you want or you can just race but if you do that you will start in last place which is not as good as first place or second place or–' (*Snip! – Ed.*)



One option has Nigel Mansell giving you a guided tour of the course. Unfortunately, most of his advice seems to be in Japanese – though it's probably a lot more interesting that way.

He's not a great deal more use out on the track, imparting his knowledge via some rather dodgy speech. It's quite handy the way you can follow along behind him, though.

You know how it is – stop moving for a minute and a herd of unsolicited windscreen-washers descends upon your car. Shoo! Go on! Get out of it! Next thing you know there'll be people waiting on the slow bends trying to sell you lucky heather.

TOP 30

PEOPLE WITH MOUSTACHES

They're not as unfashionable and physically repellent as you might think!

1 Mario
2 Tom Selleck
3 Errol Flynn
4 Nigel Mansell
5 Windsor Davies
6 David Niven
7 General Kitchener
8 Thompson
9 Thomson
10 That woman down the sandwich shop
11 Peter Bowles
12 Ian Rush
13 Ian Botham
14 Prince
15 Ken Livingstone
16 Haggar
17 Michael Fish
18 Burt Reynolds
19 Asterix The Gaul
20 Zorro
21 General Custer
22 Bruce Forsyth
23 Hercule Poirot
24 Sir Edward Elgar
25 Danny Glover
26 Lando Calrissian
27 Clark Gable
28 Ghengis Khan
29 Yosemite Sam
30 (*You're sacked! – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Nigel Mansell is a breath of fresh air compared with other Super Nintendo motor racing games. It trounces *Suzuki F1*, *Super F1 Hero* and all those iffy overhead-view ones, and the only game that really gives it a run for its money is *Human Grand Prix*.

What really makes the game is the graphics. The road scrolls unbelievably smoothly – we're still not quite sure how developers Gremlin have managed it – and incorporates some brilliant hills, dips and tunnels. Full marks, too, for the way you've always got a clear view of the road ahead – you don't suddenly get sharp corners sprung on you like you seem to in other games. And the other cars are scaled really smoothly, from being tiny specks in the distance to filling up half the road in front of you.

The actual racing itself is top quality stuff, too. While it's much easier to overtake other cars than it would be in a real race, there's still a real competitiveness to the game. And the way the cars move around on the track is really impressive, really authentic.

Great, so *Nigel Mansell* is a really smart game, and is tops for Formula One racing on the Super Nintendo. Why hasn't it got a higher mark? Well, simply because there's still so much room for improvement. You've only got to look at *Formula One Grand Prix* on the Amiga to see how much more impressive driving games are when they use 3D polygons (though the SNES would need a Super FX chip if it was to do one with them). And *Nigel Mansell* is a bit lacking in extra frills. There are no crashes, for a start – something to do with the terms of the licence, apparently – and it's impossible to drive round the track backwards (a silly but essential part of any racing game). It lacks the split-screen two-player mode that makes *Human Grand Prix* such a winner. And hardened games players might find it a touch easy. So there's a chance that the game's lastability might not quite match up to the initial impression it makes.

But on balance, if it's a Formula One game you're after, *Nigel Mansell* is the one to go for. It looks nice, it's realistic, and it's really good fun. (What were the Japanese reviewers thinking of?) Vroom!

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
86%	68%	88%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	85%
79%		

VERDICT: The best Formula One game on the Super NES. But, while it does what it does extremely well, it's a teeny bit straight-laced. High on thrills, low on frills – that just about sums it up.

'This is a picture of the starting grid and as you can see we are in last place because we did not bother to do a qualifying lap and so the computer put us in last place which is why we are not in first place or in second place or in third place or in fourth place or in fifth place or in sixth pl–' (*Snip! – Ed.*)

'This is the beginning of the race and as you can see we are in last place because we did not qualify and so we are not in first place or–' (*Snip! Snip! – Ed.*) 'That was my moustache you ba–' (*Snip! – Ed.*) 'Ow! and dat was by dose it–' (*Snip! – Ed.*) 'Ooch! you rascal you have removed my little gentleman and now I will have to do Indy racing and Mrs Mansell will not be very pleased when we–' (*SNIP! – Ed.*)

Thanks to Game Tech, (061) 831 7857, for lending us the cart.

EXHAUST HEAT 2

DRIVING GAMES SPECIAL!

Japanese Release

Game: Exhaust Heat 2
Publisher: Seta
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50-£60
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit + BB

Imagine *F-Zero* without all the futuristic trimmings, and you'll have a good idea of what the new *Exhaust Heat* looks like – there's no hiding the reliance on Mode 7 here. This game is an improvement on the original, but is it good enough to hold its head tall alongside the likes of *Nigel Mansell* and *Human Grand Prix*?

Swish 3D intro sequence looks great here, but it jerks about far too much on screen.

The first thing you'll notice about *Exhaust Heat 2* is that they've dropped the 'F1' bit from the front. That's because this new game offers you a choice of three types of racing – Group C (which consists of sportscars like the Porsches and Jaguars you see at Le Mans), the slightly faster Formula 3000 (sort of junior F1 cars) and Formula 1 itself. They all handle (as you'd expect) slightly differently, and can be improved with better engines, front and rear wings, suspension and so on – as long as you're willing to pay for it, of course.

One big criticism of the first *Exhaust Heat* was that it didn't have enough courses – something that's been rectified in the new game. Not only do you get a whole bunch of representations of real F1 circuits (Silverstone, Monaco, Kyalami et al) for the Formula One sequences, you also get eight new, fictional courses each for the Group C and F3000 races – with names like 'Moon City' and 'Laser Blaster', and featuring some lovely parallax scrolling backgrounds. The sky in some of them is fab!

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

While *Exhaust Heat 2* is a vast improvement over the original – that much, at least, is certain – we didn't like it a great deal on first playing. The reasons why will be no surprise to anyone who's seen the game – it comes across as just *F-Zero* with different graphics, and not really a genuine contender to the likes of *Human GP* or the new *Nigel Mansell*. We thought it was too lightweight, basically.

It's taken a while, though, but I'm now beginning to think that this initial judgement was actually (whisper it) *wrong*. You shouldn't really compare *Exhaust Heat 2* to *Human GP* et al at all – this is, by its nature, a fairly fast, simple arcade game, and what it sets out to do, it does very well.

I still think the game has its faults, mind. For a start, its lack of the obvious option it could possibly have been given – a split-screen two-player affair – comes across as just plain lazy. The game uses bog-standard Mode 7, so we can see no technical reason why it couldn't have had two game windows instead of one – especially as the game actually uses Seta's own custom chip DSP to get around any speed problems.

Gameplay is possibly rather over-simplified too. While there's a commendably large choice of good-looking racetracks, progression comes nearly always as a result of just steering and holding down the 'go' button, maybe taking your finger off for a second on tight corners. And for a third thing, the sprite handling isn't what it should be either – the cars judder away in front of you sometimes in quite an embarrassing fashion.

This all said, though, you can't deny it's fun – and a game that gets better the longer you play it. It's tricky too, particularly on some of the courses, though our tactic of only entering the easy races, earning lots of prize money, then spending it all on the engine, seems to be paying dividends.

A fast, fun, and generally good-looking driving game, then, and one we can recommend – if a bit half-heartedly. Slightly more ambition, some better coding, and it could have been a classic.

● Matt Bielby

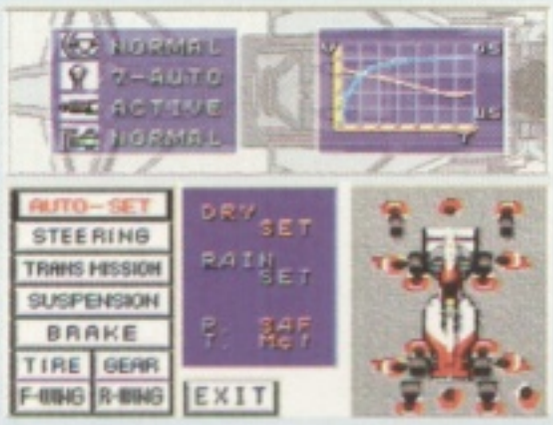
GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
86%	73%	84%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
82%		83%

VERDICT: Good looking and fast *F-Zero* lookalike that requires a bit of 'getting into' at first. No two-player option, but it's still good fun.

Thanks to Game Tech, (061) 831 7857, for the loan of this cart.

F1 GRAND PRIX PART II

F1 Grand Prix offers quite a different perspective on things. A bird's-eye one, in fact.



The technical side of things is taken to an extreme, with just about everything being adjustable, tweakable and fiddle-withable.

Japanese Release

Game: F1 Grand Prix Part II
Publisher: Video System
Price: Approx. £60
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

And here's the end-of-level boss – a balding gentleman in a suit. (*Be sensible – Ed.*) (Look, it wasn't my idea to stick in a picture of the team sponsor with a six-line caption.)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Driving games don't come much slicker than this – the graphics are very detailed, there are some great crashes and skids, there's a nice intro sequence, and there's a 'story' mode where you can follow your team's career (if you can read Japanese).

Which would all be very well except for one thing: YOU CAN'T SEE THE FLIPPING CORNERS COMING UP! How many times have we been though this before? These overhead-view driving games simply don't work properly, and it's a real pity to see so much effort going into designing all the graphics and courses, only to have the whole thing jiggered up by hairpin bends appearing out of nowhere at 200mph. Quite how the Japanese put up with it I'm not sure (they go a bundle on these games, and this one in particular has been very well received there) but I've no truck with it.

The graphics are neat, and if you're prepared to really, really concentrate, and possibly even learn all the courses off by heart, you might have some fun with this. But I really couldn't be bothered.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
79%	64%	40%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	52%
68%		

VERDICT: Slick, but very difficult, and for all the wrong reasons. To be honest, these overhead view things are best avoided unless you've got lots of patience.

SUPER F1 HERO

Here's Satoru Nakajima (the driver backing the game) in a reflective mood.

Japanese Release

Game: Super F1 Hero
Publisher: Varie
Price: Approx. £60
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

On paper it looks like any other racing game, and is certainly pretty enough, but once it's all moving you're unlikely to be quite so impressed. It's a bit on the choppy side, you see.

Phew – that car just missed us.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

After a promising front-end, with lots of options and authentic Formula One detail, *Super F1 Hero* goes rapidly downhill. The first thing you'll notice is that you get practically no impression of speed at all. Somehow, despite using Mode 7 and all that, the graphics are all sort of lumpy, and it never feels like you're going any faster than about 20mph. Driving along with a pack of other cars, it seems more like you're stuck in a traffic jam than clinging onto the road at 250mph. Given this lack of implied speed, it seems pretty daft when your car starts skidding off the road, which is something it does quite often. The steering's horrible and notchy, too, and makes you appreciate *Human Grand Prix*'s more complicated, yet more realistic, system.

In its favour – *Super F1 Hero* isn't a complete dead loss, after all – it does work quite well if you can close your eyes to the graphical deficiencies. (Er, not literally, though.) The difficulty's about right and everything. And Jez got quite excited about the crash sequences, though as usual we fail to see quite why. But *Human Grand Prix* does it all so much better and has a two-player option. And has nice graphics. And *Nigel Mansell*'s better still.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
40%	68%	60%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	49%
45%		

VERDICT: A pretty poor effort. The driving side of things sort of works, but the graphics let the game down completely.

HELLO!

Right then. What's happening on this page? We're trying to sell you another magazine, aren't we? Well, in a word, yes. We shan't beat about the bush, we shan't fudge the issue and there will almost certainly be no shilly-shallying. We'll just get on with it...

We know you've just lashed out the best part of three or four quid buying this mag, and you're probably quite enjoying it. So the idea of heading back to your local newsagent's is probably not particularly appealing. We can understand that.

But the point is that GamesMaster magazine isn't optional. It's essential. It's the only place where you'll get a true overview of the whole video games scene, every month. Each issue comes bursting with reviews, previews, tips, cheats and features guaranteed to keep your games knowledge at its peak.

This month, for example, our featured stories are the arrival of a new Super NES Batman beat-em-up, the launch of the UK Mega CD, East 17 and Said Florence's Celebrity Challenge and a background look at Probe Software – Britain's leading development house.

There's a full 40 pages of software reviews, 20 pages of tips and, er, 2 pages of Dominik.

So there we have it. The latest issue is out now, and at the thoroughly inexpensive rate of £1.95, the question you've really got to ask youself is – can I afford to be without it?

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The future of Mega Drive gaming is here! Check our reviews of three new titles on page 26!
INSIDE:
TIP FRENZY! CHAOS ENGINE, STARFOX, SUNSET RIDERS, SF 2, MORE
MEGA DRIVE
Cool Spot, Tiny Toons, Summer Challenge
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The Dark Knight returns in an all-new SNES adventure, and it's great! See page 51
EAST 17 AND SAID FLORENCE IN BUMPER BAR-ROOM BRAWL!
London's finest star in our claret-splattering Streets of Rage challenge! Rush to page 44!
Future Publishing
Channel Four Television

DRAGON BALL Z

Just because the name hasn't changed for the sequel, that doesn't mean it ain't a different game. Indeed, this new *Dragonball* is one of the most original and inventive one-on-one beat-'em-ups we've seen yet.

The *Dragonball* comics and anime (above) are almost solid fighting – just like the game, in fact.

Japanese Release

Game: Dragonball Z
Publisher: Bandai
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £60-£70
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 16 Mbit

Notice anything strange about these pictures? Yes, the two fighters are in completely different windows – but they're still fighting! Part of this is down to the fact that everyone has a long range weapon attack (à la *Street Fighter II*), and part of it's down to the clever split-screen device the game uses. You see, when both characters are standing close to each other things appear as normal. However, when they move further apart – either along the ground or, as everyone can fly, up into the sky – you get this weird, but playable, effect.

The characters are *it* in *Dragonball*, be they deceptively deadly young girls, dragon-things, bizarre robot creatures or, er, ordinary blokes, as left.

One disappointing thing about the game is the lack of variation in the backdrops. Still, the action's good.

Those little blobs near the top are a scanner device, letting you see where you are in relation to the other character.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

This ain't the game for everyone – the completely unfamiliar (to most of us) characters, the bizarre split-screen effect (which some players seem to loathe with a vengeance beyond all actual sense) and the reams of Japanese text will see to that. That said, however, you can't deny this is a great beat-'em-up, if only you're prepared to persevere with it – the depth of the thing, with special moves by the dozen (f you can work out how to do them), lift it head and shoulders above *North Star Ken 6*, *Power Athlete* and other weedy pretenders to the *Street Fighter* throne. (They don't lift it above *Dead Dance*, that said, but that's a story for elsewhere this issue.)

You see, despite the game's very obvious oddities, its strengths are those of any good one-on-one beat-'em-up – colourful, interesting characters (and lots of them), decent graphics, and loads of special moves to get your teeth into. After so many weak *SFII* copies, it's good to see a release of this type that's not afraid to be its own game, even if that does mean it ends up rather odd. Of course, the game has very Japanese origins (it is, of course, based on a popular anime series) meaning it'll probably never get an English language release (the first *Dragonball* certainly didn't), which in turn means how much you're going to get out of the moves side of things depends on how much effort you're willing to put in.

Dragonball Z, then, while obviously very good in a number of ways, really is a bit of a specialist taste. Persevere, however, and you'll probably get a lot out of it – and anime fans, who know the characters, will positively lap it up. Cautiously recommended.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
72%	68%	77%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
71%		73%

VERDICT: **Good-looking anime-based beat-'em-up, using interesting 'windows' to depict the action. Lots of moves, if hard to access.**

Thanks to Game Tech, (061) 831 7857, for the loan of this cart.

DEAD DANCE

This action replay mode lets you relive each bout's final moments over and over again. Fun for a couple of minutes.

There've been loads of attempts to knock *Street Fighter II* off its perch, but *Dead Dance* (or *Tuff E Nuff* as it's known in the US), comes closer than the rest.

Although *Dead Dance* is, to all intents and purposes, *SFII* with new characters and backgrounds (and not as good, though we'll get to that later), it's organised differently. There are two groups of characters – four you can choose to control (Syoh, Zazi, Kotono and Vortz) and the bosses. And you can play it in one of three modes:

STORY MODE: This forms the guts of the game. You first fight against the three characters you brushed aside, then against the six selectable bosses (who we'll get onto in a minute) and finally against the big end-boss. You'll have to skip through a fair amount of Japanese dialogue, so it might be worth hanging on for the US version.

1P vs CPU : This is where you can brush up your technique against the first six bosses. We'd be very surprised if there wasn't a cheat to let you pick the final one, too. (But don't phone us – we haven't a clue what it is.)

1P vs 2P: You can only use the four main characters for two-player games. (But, again, there's *bound* to be a cheat in there.)

THAT NEW ONE-ON-ONE BEAT-'EM-UP LEAGUE TABLE IN FULL

1 STREET FIGHTER II
Nothing else even comes close.

2 DEAD DANCE
But this gives it a pretty good shot.

3 FATAL FURY
The previous second choice, now dethroned.

4 RANMA 1/2
Nice graphics, but a little unbalanced.

5 RANMA 1/2 PART 2
The slightly inferior (but still not bad) sequel.

6 DRAGONBALL Z
Reviewed on page 57 of this issue.

7 BRASS BOSS
Not a patch on *SFII*.

8 POWER ATHLETE
Ditto.

9 GOLDEN FIGHTER
Ditto.

10 NORTH STAR KEN 6
Ditto.

11 SUPER BIKURIMAN
Miles too easy, and rubbish anyway.

12 PITFIGHTER
Oh dear.

BRUTE FOURS (*AAAARRGH! – ED*)

THE FOUR CHARACTERS YOU CAN CONTROL

***Street Fighter II*, if you remember, gives you eight possibilities to choose your character from, and a selection of bosses on top of that. *Dead Dance* follows a similar pattern, but only give you a choice of four characters to control. And two of those are pretty much the same. Oh well. At least they each come with a full complement of special moves, accessed by the awkward control combinations beloved of *SFII* players. Here's how they all shape up...**

ZAZI

Zazi is to Syoh what Ken is to Ryu (ie remarkably similar), so we won't dwell on him. The pair of them are handy for two-player fights, though.

SYOH

The 'Ryu' of the bunch. A bit ordinary-looking but, as is generally the case, a good all-rounder.

BEST SPECIAL MOVES:

- DOWN, DOWN/RIGHT, RIGHT and then any punch button, does a fireball.
- LEFT, DOWN/RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN/LEFT and then any punch button, makes him slide along the floor and then do a sort of Dragon Punch.
- RIGHT and then LEFT and then any punch button does a weird swishing-backwards-and-forwards sort of a punch.

Fireballs ahoy! Syoh shouldn't be first on anyone's barn dance party invitation list.

VORTZ

Vortz is your typical 'big' character: a bit slow, but good at heaving people around the place and delivering crushing punches.

BEST SPECIAL MOVES:

- Pressing the soft kick button while you're next to a floored opponent makes Vortz jump up and down on him in quite a dramatic way.
- The soft punch button can be used to make him grab hold of the other character and shake him about.
- And the hard kick button will do a suplex type of thing.

Vortz would love to try picking on someone his own size, but they aren't easy to come by.

Japanese Release

Game: Dead Dance
Alternative name: Tuff E Nuff (US/UK)
Publisher: Jaleco
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £60-£70
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2
Cart ROM: 16 Mbit

ALLAN SAYS...

We thought we'd better make sure we'd got it right, so we checked with Allan Brett, National Computer Games Champion of 1992 and author of the *Street Fighter II* Super Player's Guide in SP6.

Let's not beat about the bush – the only thing you really want to know is whether *Dead Dance* is as good as *Street Fighter II*. And the answer, unfortunately, is no.

There are plenty of special moves, countless variations of the Dragon Punch and lots of fireballs, but executing these moves is too slow and cumbersome to bother with. So, as a result, you end up with a fight of little or no variety, with both characters just using the standard moves. The game does have its good points – the sound is good, with the catchy tunes suiting the game well, and the graphics are atmospheric, though not as good as *Street Fighter II*'s. And the best part of the game is the two-player mode, which could easily justify a purchase in itself – the game won't take long to complete with one-player.

But *Dead Dance* has a half-finished feel to it, and I'm still trying to work out what happened to those extra 8 Mbits.

(UM...) ES-SIX MEN

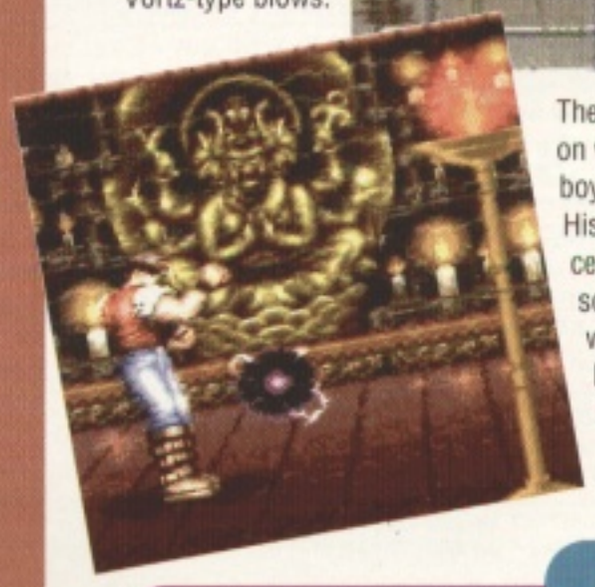
And these are the ones you can't control – the bosses:

Beans's shoes might not be the height of fashion, but they can do a lot of damage. He also does a variation on the Hundred Hand Slap. God knows who cuts his hair.

Dolf carries a knife – which he stabs you with – and a bazooka with which, for some reason, he seems content merely to whack you about the stomach.

Horribly disfigured in a space-hopper accident at an early age, Gajet hides behind a scary mask and lays into you with lots of big, hefty, Vortz-type blows.

Sirou's linchpin is his big sword, which makes it very difficult to get near him without getting bits of you chopped off.



The jury's still out on whether Rei's a boy or a girl. His/her voice is certainly pretty squeaky. Either way, though, he/she's got a mean line in fireballs.

K's's (er, his name's K's) arms appear to have been replaced by a couple of robotic squid, whose tentacles can wreak havoc with your trousers.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

We see an awful lot of one-on-one beat-'em-ups here at *Super Play*. An awful lot. It really does get quite depressing at times. Not because we've got anything against the genre, particularly. It's just that they're almost invariably terrible. *Dead Dance* is a little different, though, first because it arrived on an even bigger wave of hype than usual, and secondly because it's actually rather good.

What's nice is the effort that Jaleco have invested in making sure it's something a bit special. This is no half-hearted, scrappy-looking, one-on-one equivalent of *Rival Turf*. Instead we've got proper animation, loads of moves and enough depth to keep even the most vociferous beat-'em-up sceptic hooked. While the game's easy to get into, it takes ages to get to grips with all the special moves and things. (Er, if you ever manage to get to grips with them at all, that is. But we'll get to that in a minute.) It's better than *Fatal Fury*. It's better than either of the *Ranma 1/2* games. And it's better than *Dragonball Z* (if only because it's easier to work out what's going on).

But is it better than *Street Fighter II*?

Nope. Although *Dead Dance* comes closer than anything's ever come before, it lags behind *SFII* in just about every respect. The backgrounds aren't anywhere near as good, the sprites aren't as well animated, the sound isn't quite as good and the characters aren't quite as varied, and nowhere near as appealing. And the special moves, while perfectly numerous and effective, are just a little too awkward to access. So, like Allan says in his little box, I tended not to bother with them most of the time, thus robbing the game of much of its depth. And, perhaps worst of all, *Dead Dance* gets so tied up with trying to be like *SFII* that it completely forgets to try any new ideas of its own. Apart from the differences in characters and moves, and the odd useless thing like the action replay, there's nothing here that isn't in *SFII*.

All this means that, while *Dead Dance* can safely be recommended to people who've conquered *Street Fighter II*, are thirsting for more special moves and combos to learn, but can't wait for *SFII Turbo*, *SFII* remains the number one choice for first-time beat-'em-up buyers. Sorry.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
75%	72%	80%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
82%		78%

VERDICT: A pretty good beat-'em-up with plenty of depth and challenging gameplay. Ultimately, though, it's NAGA*SFII.**

*Not as good as *Street Fighter II*. (We're sick of writing it in full.)

KOTONO

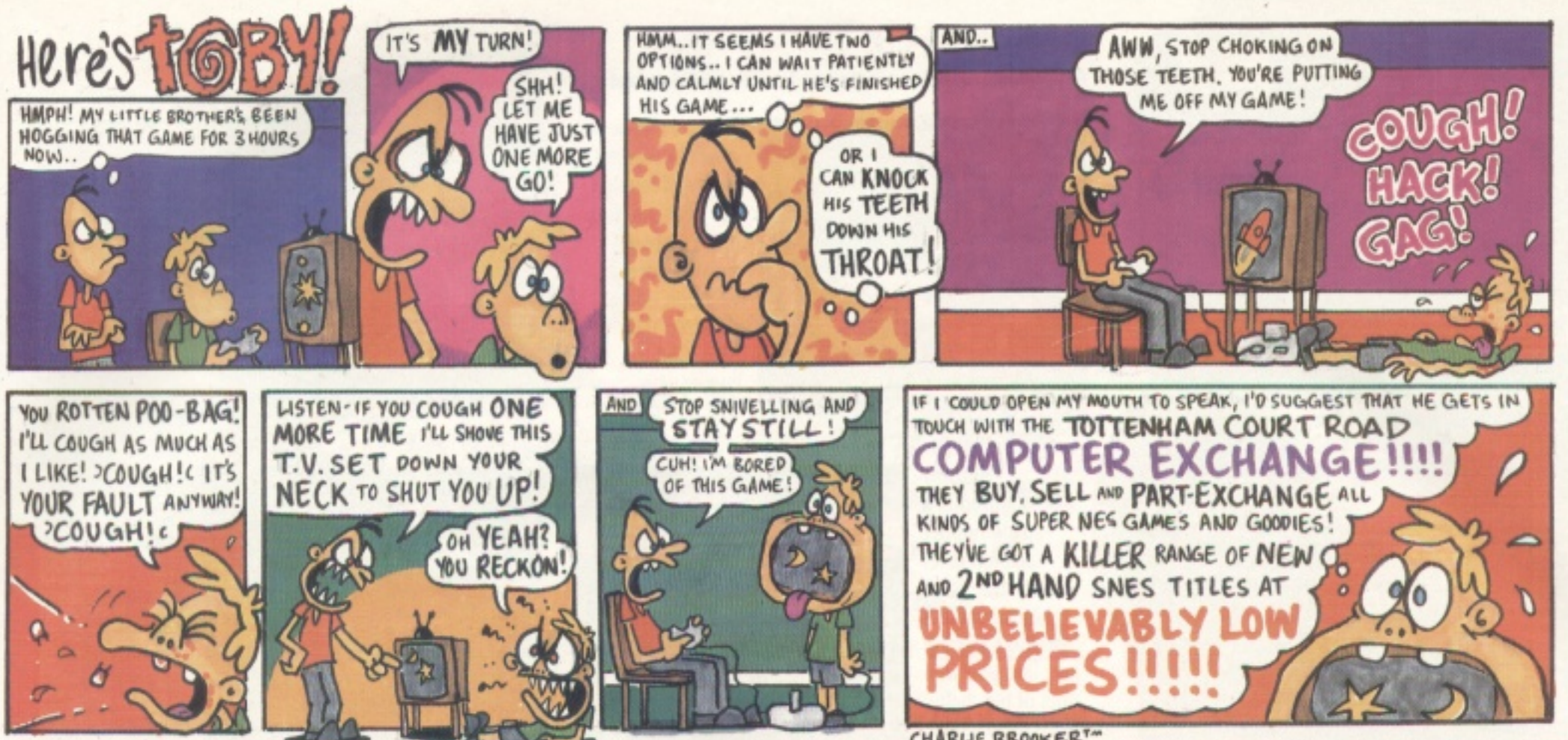
Kotono carries the flag for the other half of the population, and makes a pretty good job of it with her nasty knife things.

BEST SPECIAL MOVES:

- Holding LEFT for a bit and then pressing right and then a punch button launches a couple of knives, fireball fashion.
- Doing much the same sort of thing but then pressing a kick button does a spinny, spiralling, jumping attack that hardly ever seems to hit anything.

Kotono also comes in handy as a coffee table (below) and a clothes line prop (right).

Thanks to Game Tech, (061) 831 7857, for the loan of this cart.


Here's TOBY!
HMPH! MY LITTLE BROTHER'S BEEN HOGGING THAT GAME FOR 3 HOURS NOW..
IT'S MY TURN!
SHH! LET ME HAVE JUST ONE MORE GO!
HMM.. IT SEEMS I HAVE TWO OPTIONS.. I CAN WAIT PATIENTLY AND CALMLY UNTIL HE'S FINISHED HIS GAME...
OR I CAN KNOCK HIS TEETH DOWN HIS THROAT!
AND..
AWW, STOP CHOKING ON THOSE TEETH. YOU'RE PUTTING ME OFF MY GAME!
COUGH! HACK! GAG!
YOU ROTTEN POO-BAG! I'LL COUGH AS MUCH AS I LIKE! >COUGH!< IT'S YOUR FAULT ANYWAY! >COUGH!<
LISTEN - IF YOU COUGH ONE MORE TIME I'LL SHOVE THIS T.V. SET DOWN YOUR NECK TO SHUT YOU UP!
OH YEAH? YOU RECKON!
AND
STOP SNIVELLING AND STAY STILL!
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COOL WORLD

The Ralph Bakshi film – a saucy, bargain-basement *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?* – was not a success. Now Ocean's Super NES version is here. Will it make amends?

***Cool World*'s hero – comic artist Jack Deebs, played in the film by Gabriel Byrne – is sucked into a world where cartoons have come to life. It's like a seedy, backstreets version of the Toon Town bit from *Roger Rabbit*. Unfortunately 'doodles' (cartoons) are also escaping into the real world. It's all a bit of a mess, and Jack must try to put it right. So why's all this happening? Well, it's all got something to do with a cartoon woman, Holli – played by Kim Basinger – trying to tempt our hero into having (ahem) carnal relations with her – which will turn her into a human.**

Cool World's graphics are moody, cartoony and impressive – many scenes and characters looking much like their movie equivalents.

These driving bits require you to do one of two main things – stop at the traffic lights, and jump over the gaps. Oh, and avoid barrels etc.

Here's a screen you'll be seeing a lot of – the game over one. Nice looking, isn't it? The graphics are the one big strength of the game.

SUB LEVELS ABOUND

Here's a typical one: Enter the Malt Shop in Sweet Place and you enter...

...this candy-packed level. The sprites you'll find here have to be fed milkshakes – or punched out.

GAME OVER DUDE!

Next stop along the line after the main street in *Cool World* is Sweet Place, a second cartoon world, but this time populated by incredibly cute, jolly creatures and buildings. Don't be fooled by their looks though – they're just as vicious as the *Cool World* denisons.

Game: Cool World
Publisher: Ocean
Developer: In-house
Price: £44.99
Release: May
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

UK Release

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Coming, as it does, hot on the heels of the great *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*, *Cool World* has to be seen as something of a disappointment. Alright, a *lot* of a disappointment. The tortuous, and – yes – boring movie plot has obviously frozen Ocean's game designers into a state of complete indecision. Indeed, short of going the rather predictable platform-game-using-occasional-characters-from-the-film route, I couldn't see how they were going to turn the movie into a playable SNES game *at all* – it seems as if Ocean's designers had the same trouble.

The problems with the film are too numerous to mention here. The problem with the game, however, is much more simple – they didn't know what to do with it, so they've bunged in everything but the kitchen sink to try and compensate. Thus we get bright, loud, true-to-the-film, and sometimes very attractive, graphics covering up some very linear (and short) levels. We get a million and one shops and other little sub-bits to enter, but very little to actually do in the main game itself (just pick things up and fight cartoon animals with your one fighting move – an extra long punch). We get plenty of 'chats' with doodle characters we meet, but few of them amount to much. We basically get a game you'll finish pretty fast, with little feeling of achievement once you've done so.

It's a shame, because much about the game is OK – chiefly the graphics, the front end presentation, and the way the spirit of the film has been brought across more or less intact (it's certainly more successful in this area than the likes of *Lethal Weapon*, say). However, it still amounts to a frustrating, repetitive and ultimately very short-lived gameplaying experience. Avoid.

● Matt Bielby

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
81%	75%	50%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	52%
48%		

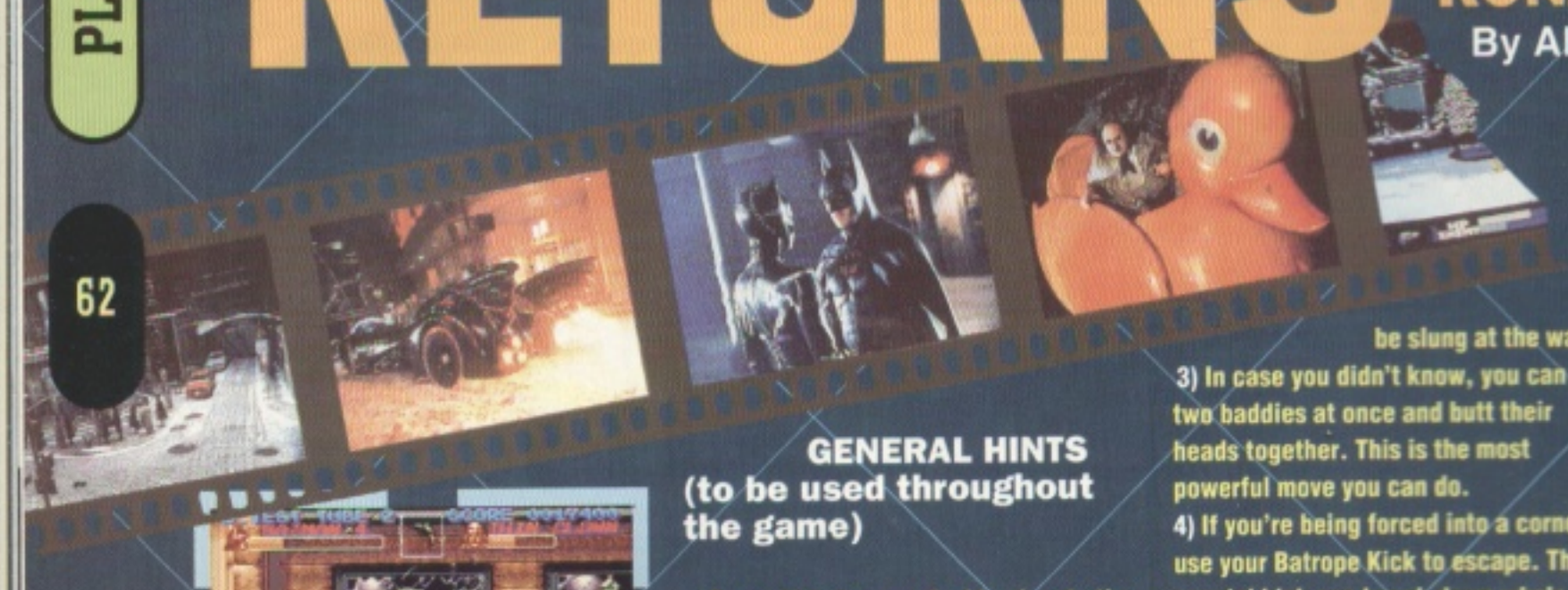
VERDICT: Good looking, and – on the surface – complex film conversion that, once you start playing it, boils down into not very much at all. A real disappointment after the likes of *Pugsley*.

BATMAN RETURNS

SUPER PLAYER'S GUIDE

KONAMI (JAP)

By Allan Brett



Having (ahem) a 'smashing time' doing the Christmas shopping.

Would you believe it? Yes, Konami have done it again with this one – a sensational-looking and very playable fighting game, which takes the two almost completely discredited genres of film tie-ins and scrolling beat-'em-ups, combines them, and then somehow makes the resulting should-be-mess work. It's a pretty tricky devil too, which is where gaming champ Allan Brett's tips come in...

GENERAL HINTS (to be used throughout the game)

1) To avoid being punched back onto the floor as you get up, always use your special attack to clear the way and give yourself some breathing space.
2) When there's a wall in the background, throw your opponents at it. Not only is this move more powerful than the Body Slam, any other baddies caught in your opponent's line of flight will also be slung at the wall.
3) In case you didn't know, you can grab two baddies at once and butt their heads together. This is the most powerful move you can do.
4) If you're being forced into a corner, use your Batrope Kick to escape. This special kick can knock down whole rows of baddies.
5) Don't bother using your ability to block, as it doesn't reduce any damage enough to make it worthwhile.
6) If a baddy is being a bit of a pain, a well-placed Batarang should stun him long enough for you to kick him in.
7) Usually, approaching a baddy from a horizontal direction (ie on the same plane as him/her) means you get a damn good kicking. So, always approach the enemy by walking up or down into him.
8) Problems with the bomb carriers? Throw a Batarang at them to make them drop the bomb at their feet. This not only saves you from danger, but removes half their energy too.

The baddies get their heads together, but Batman still outwits them.

You've got to hit the stilt-walkers' heads with your Batarangs. You really have.

LEVEL 1: ATTACK ON GOTHAM PLAZA

Working your way through level one should be simple enough – and before long you'll reach the end-of-level baddy. To get a head start, use your Batrope to pull a chunk of rock from the wall which will then hit the baddy in the head (remember this from the film?). Then jump over his roll attacks and keep pumping him with Batarangs.

Now give it a sharp tug and your headache becomes his.

LEVEL 2: FIGHT IN THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY

In this second level, some very nifty Batrope skills are needed once the building has been set ablaze, but it's not as difficult as you may think. The next section is pretty easy, too. The end-of-level strongman is defeated by simply walking into him from either above or below, and delivering a couple of Head Butts before slamming him onto the floor. Using one of the henchmen to allow you to use the move where they butt one another is also a pretty good idea.

You'll need the Batrope for this bit.

Hurrah! Thanks Batman! The streets of Gotham are safe again for a bit, with the demise of Tweedledum. Roll on level three...

Right Tweedledee, you just get back up there and clean that spot off my window or there'll be trouble.

LEVEL 3: ON THE PROWL

In the first bit, stay in the middle of the lift platform. The second part is trickier. Use the crumbling window ledges and your Batrope to get onto a higher platform with some goodies on it.

Should you fail to reach this platform, use your Batrope to swing across. A test-tube can be found underneath the edge of the platform at the beginning of this level.

There are some goodies up there somewhere, but reaching them is *enormously* difficult.

Your first confrontation with Catwoman is probably the hardest. When she either stands still for a split second, or uses her whip, you should try to grab her and give her the kicking she so richly deserves. Remember though – if she is standing close to you as she gets up she'll kick you to the floor, so use your special move to take her out. Also watch out when she starts doing backflips everywhere, as this indicates she is about to use her deadly Dash Attack. Very nasty.

Nice lighting effects on level four.

LEVEL 4: THE PENGUIN'S TRAP

Working your way to Catwoman is simple, and she's easier to deal with here than in the last level. However, once Catwoman is down you then face The Penguin. The Penguin's pretty tricky, as there's no tactic to waste him as such. Still, as long as you don't go underneath him, don't jump too often, beware of his sneak and dive attacks, and keep firing at him, he isn't all that difficult. And watch out for his boomerang-type umbrellas!

Rescuing a damsel in distress from The Penguin's clutches.

LEVEL 5: TO THE BATMOBILE

Stay in the centre of the road to avoid rows of bikers – a simple left, right movement should be enough to avoid any missiles. The Penguin's campaign van is sooooo easy: ignore anything it shoots, just pump it with bullets. However, if you're low on life, stick to one side of the road and move over to the other side when you get things thrown at you.

To kill the boss (that van) just keep shooting and shooting and shooting. The chances of you failing are approximately 300,000:1 against.

LEVEL 6: CIRCUS TRAIN

My only advice for this level is to put your block up when the barriers appear. These will take care of all the baddies...

Just stand there with your guard up and you're sorted.

Oops, missed! Being atop a moving circus train is playing havoc with Batman's aim.

...except the dark blue clowns. Neat, eh?
The Organ Grinder boss is dealt with in much the same way as the Strongman. Just don't stray too far away or he'll spray you with bullets.

LEVEL 7: THE PENGUIN'S LAIR

If you don't behave, I'll knock your heads together.

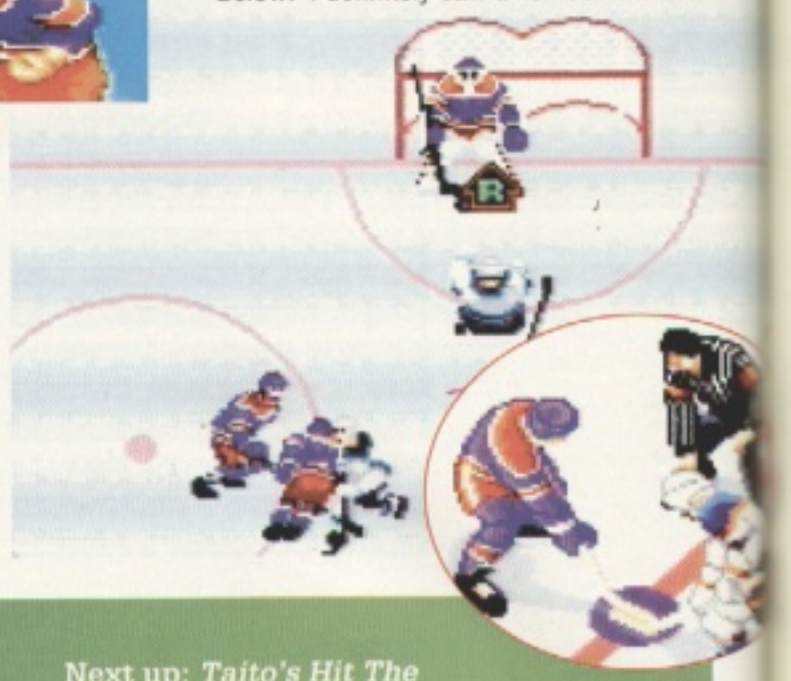
Well, you've managed to get this far, so reaching the end of the level should pose you no problems.

The duck is dealt with by just standing there and blasting it – nothing sophisticated at all. (Okay, so you'll probably lose a life or two, but it always gets the job done well.) The Penguin himself is a wimp. Use Grab Attacks when he's on the floor, and use another one when he starts flying around (grab him as he throws Umbrella Bombs). You shouldn't even lose a life if this is done properly.

NB If any of you finish the game on 'Mania', look out for the coolest pic of Batman after the credits.

USA ICE HOCKEY

Left: 'There's something there, all right. I think it might be an eyelash.'
Below: 'I definitely saw a fish down there.'



Japanese Release

Game: USA Ice Hockey
Publisher: Jaleco
Price: Approx. £50
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The rink is invaded by a battalion of Imperial Storm Troopers.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

What you want to know, of course, is whether *USA Ice Hockey* is better than Electronic Arts' *NHLPA Hockey*. AND DON'T YOU DARE LOOK AT THE SCORE AT THE END! You'll spoil all my fun, otherwise.

Well, in one respect it's a definite improvement on *NHLPA*. The graphics are animated really smoothly. Almost as well as *NHLPA*'s on the Mega Drive in fact.

But, er, that's about it. Hockey games don't really major on the graphics anyway, on the whole. What they're all about is fast, zappy action and easy-to-cope-with controls. And *USA Ice Hockey* fails on both counts. Not only does it slow down horribly whenever a decent number of players appear on the screen, but it never gets the hang of chucking the puck around the place – it always seems to move at the same speed, so you can never really whack it into the back of the net. And, speaking of which, the goalies are much too hard to beat when they're set to 'automatic'. And as for the controls, the computer never seems to assign control to the player you really need to have control of. You can switch it by pressing one of the buttons, but by the time you've remembered which button it is you'll have missed the tackle and most likely found yourself a goal down.

Next up: *Taito's Hit The Ice*. Will that fare any better?

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
78%	70%	53%
GAMELIFE 64%	OVERALL SCORE:	60%

VERDICT: Looks nice, but doesn't play too well. *NHLPA* is still the ice hockey game to go for.

SUPER TOM & JERRY

It's Tom! It's Jerry! It's Tom and Jerry!

US Release

Game: Super Tom & Jerry
Publisher: High-Tech Expressions
Price: Approx. £45
Cart ROM: 4 Mbit

Tom knows a well-written review when he sees one. Jerry, meanwhile, seems less certain.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Tom And Jerry on the TV: a good, solid, slapstick cartoon which, discounting the poor episodes made in the '60s, and while not having the brilliance of *Roadrunner*, can always be relied on to provide a laugh or two.

Tom And Jerry on the Super NES: a sad platform game that hasn't got two original ideas to rub together, slows down if anything larger than a beetle appears, has nothing to offer in the graphics and sound departments, and is far too easy to finish, despite numerous unfair jumping-into-mid-air-in-the-hope-that-a-platform-will-scroll-into-view-for-you-to-land-on bits.

Other than the name, the link between the two products isn't clear. One's got a cat and a mouse pitting their wits against each other in a constant battle for supremacy. The other's just got a mouse hopping about on some platforms, with the cat making token appearances. One's got lots of funny animated fates for its characters to meet. The other just makes the mouse flicker and disappear when he gets hit. One's really good. The other's a lot of tommyrot.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	40%	49%
GAMELIFE 35%	OVERALL SCORE:	42%

VERDICT: A largely worthless attempt to cash in on the *Tom And Jerry* name that isn't going to keep the average player amused for long.

BOB

No, we don't know what *BOB* stands for. Bit Of Both? Bring Out the Branston? Boring Old Bo– (*Thank you – Ed.*)

Frooooosh! BOB tries out one of the juicier weapons that're to be found scattered around the game's three platform-, baddy- and lift-filled worlds. The monster on the receiving end turns light blue.

Game: BOB
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Gray Matter
Price: £44.99
Release: June
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

UK Release

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

With its seen-'em-all-before sprites, boring palette, lack of Mode 7 effects, simple platform-game layout, 'bleep-bloop-bleep' sound effects, well-animated but characterless hero, awkward controls, sparsely-scattered pick-ups, rubbish music and minimalist level-design, *BOB* could easily be mistaken for something that might have come out on the Amiga years ago.

But that needn't be a problem. After all, the simplest games are usually the most enjoyable ones (if you ignore things like *Starfox*) and, indeed, *BOB* is quite good fun for a while. It's got an earthy, returning-to-roots quality to it, and the difficulty seems to be pitched about right so that you get a little bit further each time you play.

But then it starts to get on your nerves. You find that, although the game gets steadily harder, more often than not you're getting killed by baddies you haven't a hope of avoiding, or by jumping onto hazards you can't actually see until after you've jumped. The controls don't seem quite right, either. They work fine most of the time, but it's annoying not being able to jump while BOB's crouched down, for example – you have to stand up and then jump, which takes ages. That might sound picky, but when there's so little else to distract you it's hard not to notice these things.

BOB might have raised a few eyebrows five or ten years ago. Except there weren't any SNESs around then so, erm, it probably wouldn't have. Unless, perhaps, you'd gone into a shop and seen it on a shelf with 'Super Nintendo' written on it. 'Spook!' you'd have thought. 'Super Nintendo? But I've only just bought my ordinary Nintendo.' Then you'd have looked at the pictures of *BOB* on the back of the box. 'Oh. Maybe they just wrote "Super" on it by mistake.' And your eyebrow would have returned to its normal resting position.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
65%	60%	65%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
46%		54%

VERDICT: Fun for a bit, but too unoriginal and limited to make a real impression. BOB? (*Er... oh, go on then – Ed.*) NOB, more like!

BOB'S YOUR ROBOT

Well, this is BOB. He's a robot, he's orange, and he's crashed on a remote asteroid while on his way to a date (it says here.)

Hanging on for dear life.

Ascending to ever higher heights.

Leaping into action again?

Ducking his responsibilities.

(Oh crumbs.) Waving in the wind.

Not quite landing on his feet.

Er... Melting into his surroundings?

Crackle! Another baddy (a sort of flame-spitting plant thing) succumbs to BOB's weapon, opening the way to the exit.

Fwrooosh! Another one checks out. While the flame thrower looks the part, and shouldn't for a minute be knocked...

...this triple laser affair is considerably more practical in the long run.

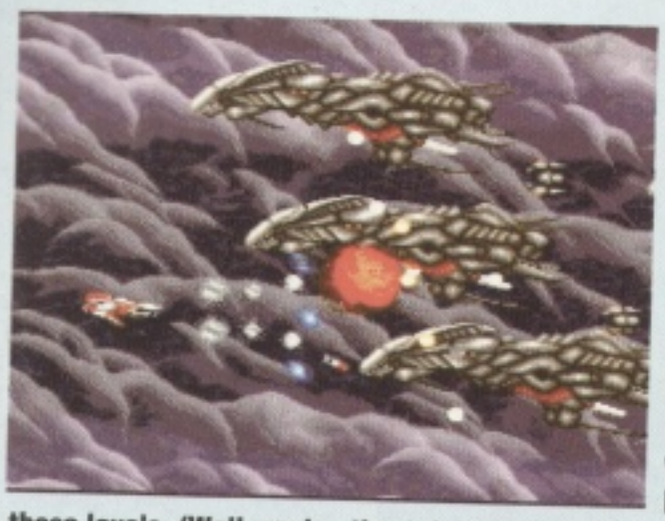
You can follow BOB's progress on this map of the asteroid he's crashed on.

This fascinating screen appears when you press pause, and gives you lots of stats.

BIO METAL

There are nine horizontally-scrolling spaceship-type shoot-'em-ups on the Super Nintendo (well, nine-and-a-half if you include *Axelay*). *Bio Metal* changes all that though. There's now, er, ten. (*Or ten-and-a-half – Ed.*)

Okay chaps, listen up! Outer colonies destroyed by aliens... blah blah... you've been chosen to defend... blah blah... action stations... blah blah. You know the drill.



The action comes thick and fast in *Bio Metal*, throughout six progressively difficult levels. Though at first the weapons system will probably cause you a few problems (resulting in frequent death), it doesn't take long to get to grips with, and you'll soon be racing through those levels. (Well, racing through in a die-and-use-one-of-the-three-continues kind of a way. Yes, for once, we're spared that infinite continues nonsense.) This is level one, by the way, right at the start.

Japanese Release

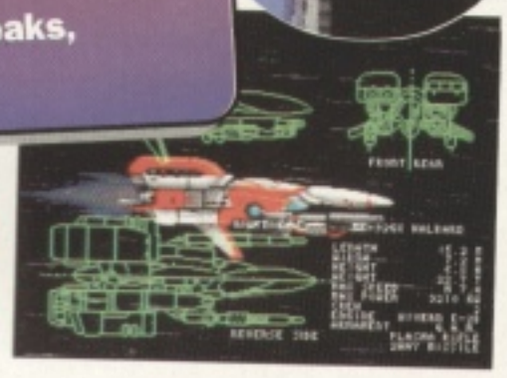
Game: Bio Metal
Publisher: Athena
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £50
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

CONFIDENTIAL INFO

And what's a game without a couple of heroes? Let's have a hand for our brave pilots. Dave and Cynthia, come on down...

Cynthia MATTHEWS
Age: 21
Sex: Female
Status: Single
Blood Group: A
Occupation: Biologist
Likes: Dolls, puppies, kittens

David ONIZUKA
Age: 25
Sex: Male
Status: Bigamist
Blood Group: B
Occupation: Pilot/Street trader
Likes: Rare steaks, killing things



Fascinating facts provide hours of fun for spaceship spotters.

LEVEL 1

Confusingly fast parallax clouds scroll by on the first level, with an immediate onslaught of baddies.

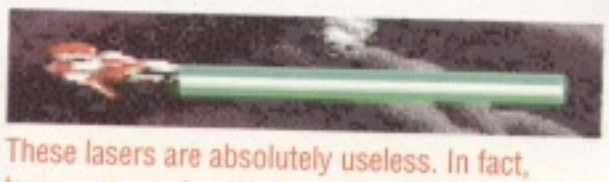
Lightning streaks through the angry clouds as you open your assault on the waves of alien ships.

Entering the screen in stretchy Mode 7, it's... the first boss! Top tip: dodge it and shoot.

IT'S KILLING TIME!

The weapons system in Bio Metal pulls no punches, but it ain't that radical either – not when compared to the groovy systems you get in games like Super Aleste et al. There are three main weapons which can be powered up individually three times by collecting icons.

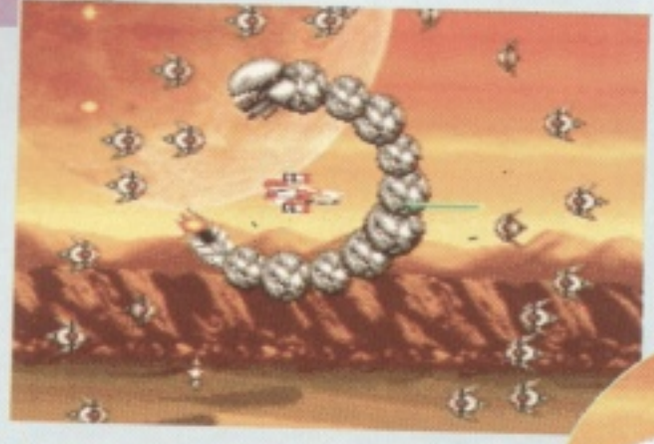
Your bog standard, no nonsense, blue bullet thingies are actually the best general purpose weapon – once you've got a few of them. There are three types of missiles too.



These lasers are absolutely useless. In fact, lasers are nearly *always* useless in these sorts of games, which makes you wonder why anybody bothers including them.

Now, it might be straight out of *Darius*, but the wave weapon is pretty good all the same. Once you've powered it up, make sure you keep it.

These orbs rotate around your ship and protect it from enemies. They can also be manipulated to take out a wider range of baddies.



Thirty-three, thirty-four... yes, the sprite count shoots up rapidly on the second level. Unfortunately this means things *do* slow down too.

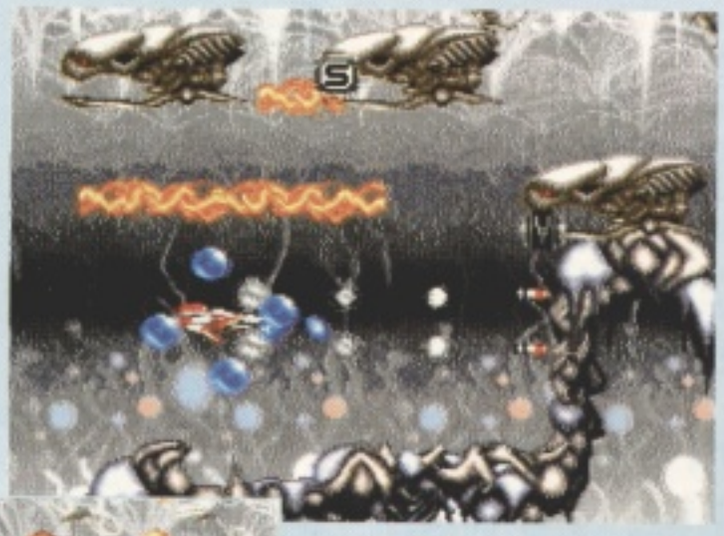
LEVEL 2

In stark contrast to level one, the second section sees you flying across a barren desert, complete with parallax sand dunes...

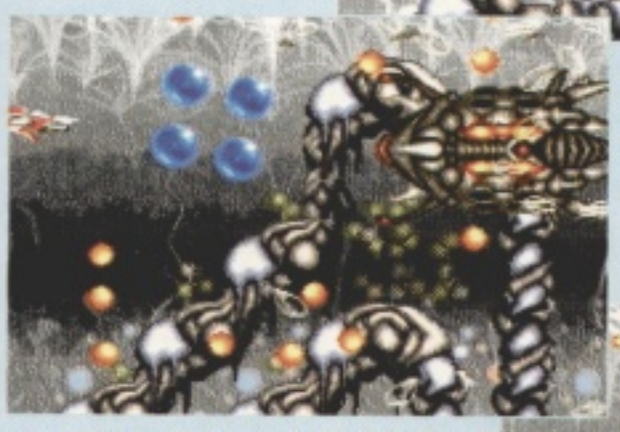
The second boss has arms which try to blow a deadly green flame at you. And what a nice effect it is.

LEVEL 3

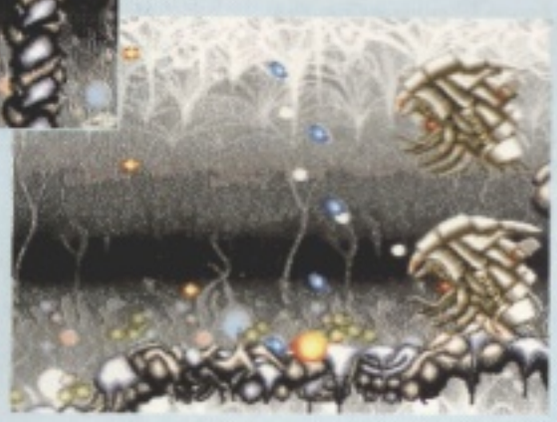
Here we take a dive into the murky depths of an underwater cavern-type place – one that's distinctly organic, and full of weird things. It's a bit like your average health food shop, but (er) more shoot-'em-uppy. (*Lord preserve us – Ed.*)



This underwater section features plenty of lovely aliens, and a couple of power-ups here. Now, if only you had room to get at them!



Level three's mid-boss tries to hide in some scenery while you chuck your blue orb-type things at it.

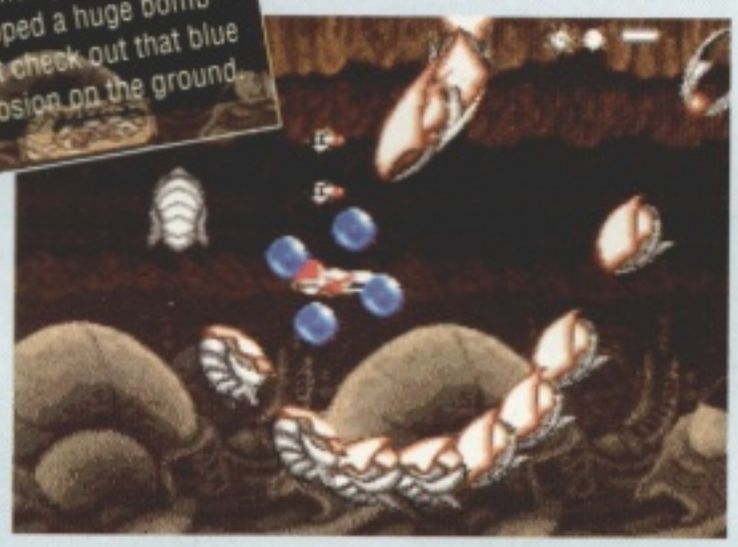


Metallic shellfish enemies surge relentlessly forward through the cloudy depths. (*Slick – Ed.*)

LEVEL 4

Those with a good memory might recall that the fourth level of *Phalanx* was surprising similar to this one. It's set underground with lots of soil, and it's generally very, well, brown. It's kind of reminiscent of *R-Type* too.

Your enemies don't actually seem to change much throughout the game – this giant metallic thing crops up more or less every level, I think.

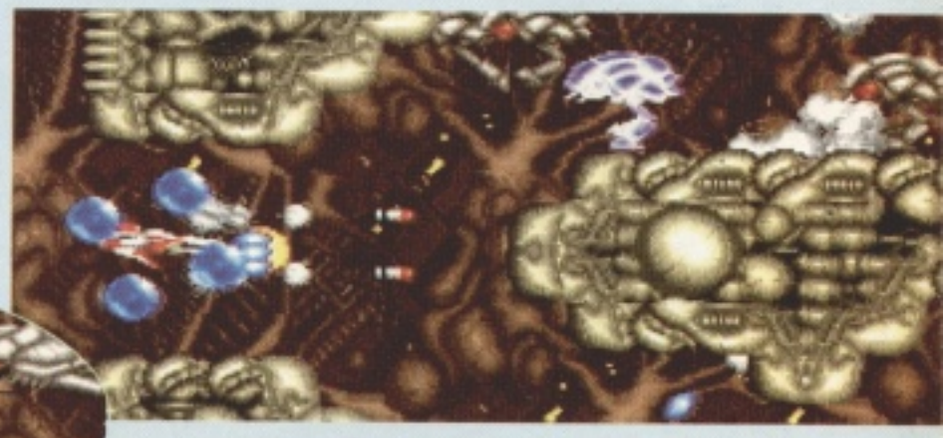


More *R-Type* influences can be seen in the final boss on this level. He looks good, but unfortunately slow-down makes this opponent a bit of a walk over.

LEVEL 5

It's all starting to get a little bit samey, isn't it? The warping background is perhaps the only thing that really distinguishes this level from the previous one. The baddies you have to exterminate remain attractive, though.

More *R-Type*! Sections like this conjure up images of Japanese programmers following some sort of step-by-step manual on how to design a blaster to look exactly like the last one.



As mentioned earlier, some of the enemy craft actually verge on the attractive. (Okay, so it's *R-Type again*, but trying to design the perfect enemy sprites after *R-Type* is a bit like trying to design the perfect alien after HR Gieger has had a go. Maybe we'll let them off.)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

There's something nice and reliable about this kind of game on machines like the PC Engine and Mega Drive. Even in the hands of the shoddiest of programmers, their hardware is fast enough to cope with a whole screenful of sprites, and still keep speed up at the same time – essential ingredients for a good shoot-'em-up. True, most of their games may not be that imaginative, but at least technical problems don't muck them up.

On the Super Nintendo, of course, it's a different story. A slow central processor has been a permanent thorn in the machine's side – it takes a good programmer to make a complex shoot-'em-up work on the machine. Early games like *Super R-Type* and, particularly, *Gradius III* show what can so easily go wrong – with these games often grinding to a near halt, even with just a few sprites on screen. Yes, things have generally improved as programmers have learnt to get the best from the hardware – *Bio Metal* goes some way towards proving that – but it's far from a dead problem.

Taking this past shoot-'em-up history into account, then, *Bio Metal* doesn't fair too badly. It *does* slow down a lot, but happily the difficulty level is pumped up high enough that this occasional lightening of the pressure on you can actually be a welcome relief (at least in the later stages), allowing the player to get through the most densely-packed spots more or less intact. This is, it has to be said, a game absolutely packed full of sprites – so much so, in fact, that it actually manages to look very coin-oppy for most of the time, with some great-looking sprites and backdrops. The developers should be proud. Sure, it's no *Axelay*-beater graphically, but the fact that it's a fair bit more hectic in the gameplay department actually manages to make it quite a bit more exciting.

There are a number of downsides, of course. Though the game looks good, it does seem to take far too much of its inspiration from *R-Type* et al, and there is, of course, the slow-down. Complete mastery of the controls takes a bit of managing too (though it's worth it – the game seems to open up a fair amount afterwards), and I must admit I was a little disappointed by how weak some of the later bosses are (on 'Easy' setting, at least), but the game is generally a solid one – certainly a step along from your *Phalanx*'s and so on, if not quite up there with *Super Aleste*.

A decent enough addition to anybody's shoot-'em-up collection, then. While what it does won't over-impress anyone, it's unlikely to disappoint either. In fact, it's the *nicest* shoot 'em up I've seen in ages – perhaps that's its one real problem.

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
79%	78%	70%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
72%		71%

VERDICT: A polished game with decent graphics and enjoyable and tricky (on 'Hard') action. It's originality it lacks, not challenge.

Thanks to Game Tech, (061) 831 7857, for the loan of this cart

2020 SUPER BASEBALL

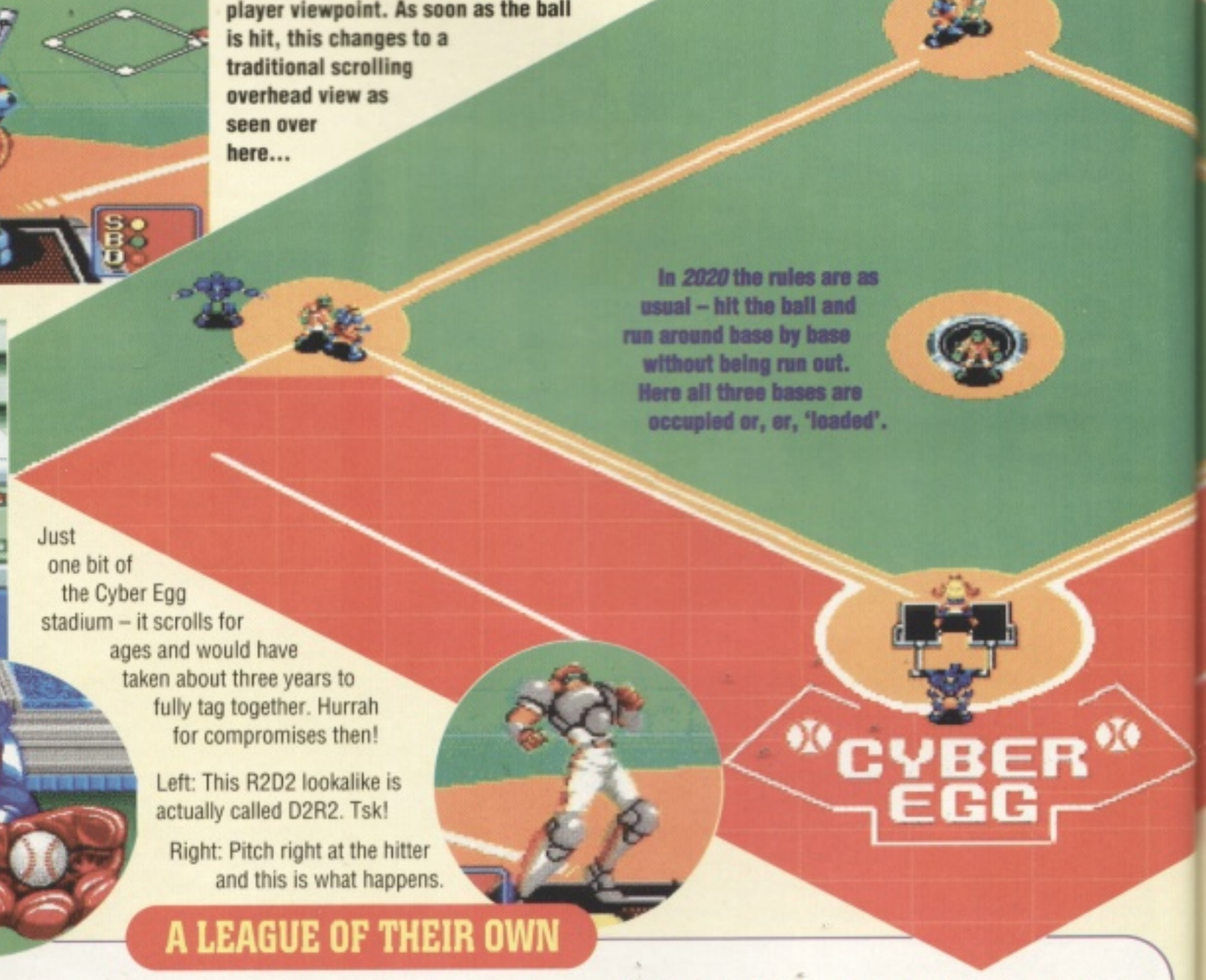
Super NES conversions from the flash, expensive Neo Geo have (so far) been rather lacking. It's with great relief, then, that justice has been done finally, and to one of its better games too...

Japanese Release

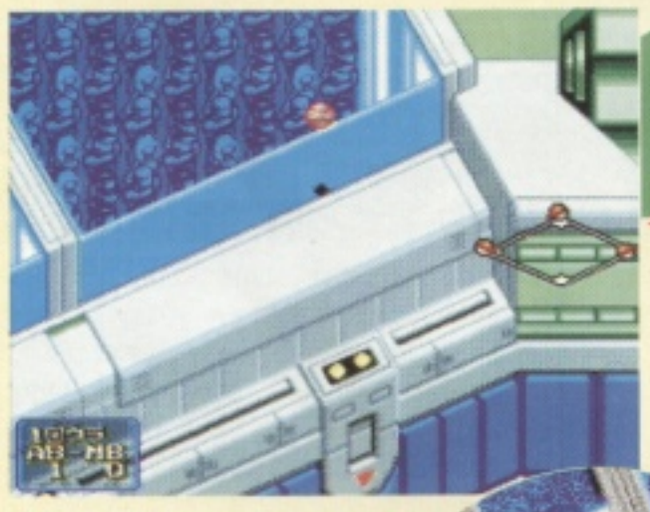
Game: 2020 Super Baseball
Publisher: K Amusement Leasing Co (KAC)
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £60-£70
Release: Out now
Players: 1 or 2 simultaneously
Cart ROM: 12 Mbit

2020 Super Baseball **was the second of three baseball games to appear on the Neo Geo. SNK *do* seem to have got the knack of turning the sport into an extremely enjoyable game. All three rely on the same basic formula, incorporating the standard behind-the-player viewpoint. As soon as the ball is hit, this changes to a traditional scrolling overhead view as seen over here...**

The biggest difference with *2020 Super Baseball* is the players – a mixture of *Speedball*-type guys and gals and R2D2 droids.



In *2020* the rules are as usual – hit the ball and run around base by base without being run out. Here all three bases are occupied or, er, 'loaded'.



Just one bit of the Cyber Egg stadium – it scrolls for ages and would have taken about three years to fully tag together. Hurrah for compromises then!

There are two seat prices in *2020* and here's the more expensive alternative – indoor viewing, where the chances of getting baseball on the nose (that's travelling at around 230mph), are drastically reduced.

Left: This R2D2 lookalike is actually called D2R2. Tsk!

Right: Pitch right at the hitter and this is what happens.

A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

In most baseball games, the fielders are completely hopeless – they're either pathetically slow or just plain stupid, often letting the ball roll past their feet without even flinching. In *2020 Super Baseball* things aren't perfect either, but the fielders are handled far more impressively. For a start, hitting the ball high into the air will often automatically position a fielder beneath it to catch the player out. This is one aspect of the game that can get annoying if you've got a weak team – a little less automation on the part of the catchers would have helped. Also, a scanner showing the positions of all the fielders might have improved matters – sometimes it's difficult to see just who's around to retrieve the ball, and it can seem like fielders take ages to reach it.

However, these faults *can* be tolerated and are more than made up for by the sheer speed of the whole fielding process. Chucking the ball to the bases, and particularly between them, is fast and slick, and the core of the gameplay lies in the fast interaction of the fielders on each of the bases. Trapping a batter between two bases is great fun – he dodges back and forwards in an attempt to confuse you.

A sure-fire catch – there're too many of these, unfortunately.

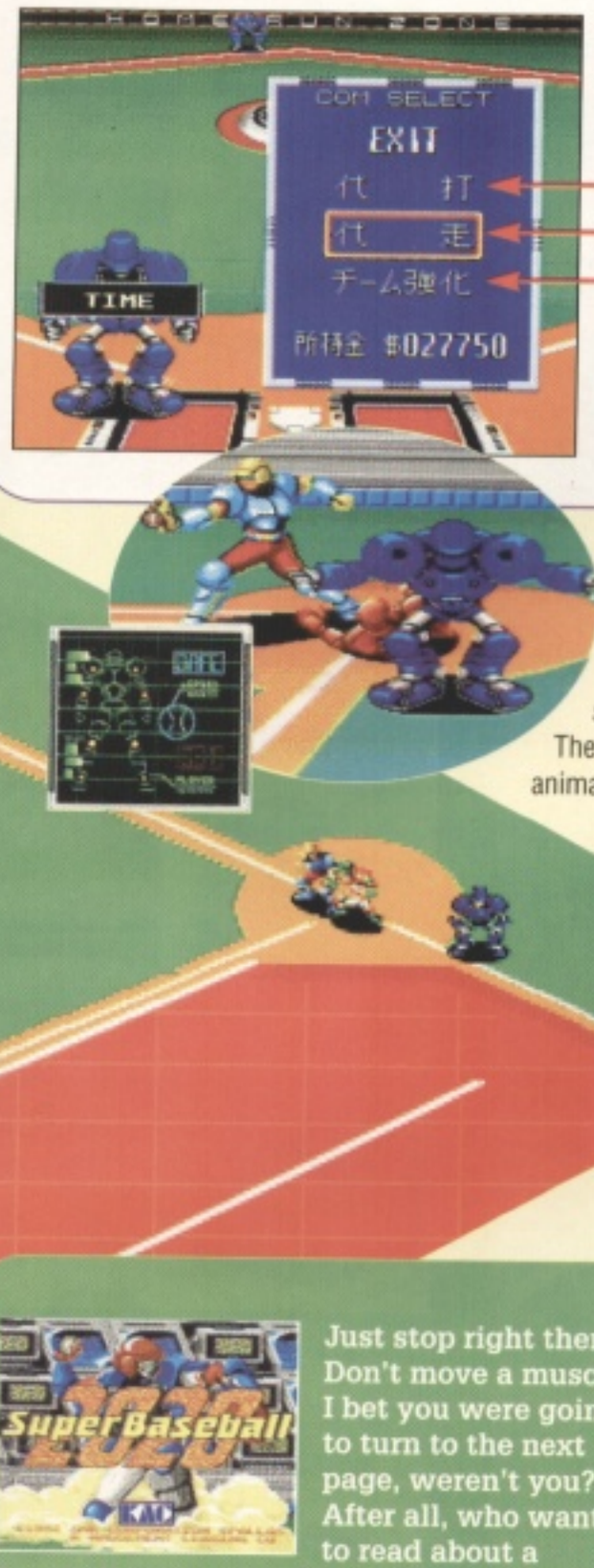
Fielders can dive to get to a ball quicker – and even show off on occasion. However, position them at the wrong angle and they go skidding all over the place.

Crikey. Erm, nice catch, luv. The game is packed full of impressive spot animations like this. Great, eh?

ALL POWERED UP (IN JAPANESE)

Cash is the main weapon in *2020 Baseball*. The opportunity to upgrade players makes the difference between a winning and losing team. Once a few runs have been clocked, upgrade your team to see some spectacular results and, hopefully, avoid being caught out so regularly.

Call a time out and this is what you get – a robot allowing you to change players, and even power-up the abilities of team members.



This option simply lets you change your batter or pitcher for a better one.

Runners on bases can be changed round and even substituted, with this option.

Power up the team by selecting this one. The screen on the right will then appear.

Er, three lots of fried rice and... um, some decent batter(s) too please! (*Heaven forbid – Ed.*) Don't be scared, this is simply a list of your players in katakana. As you power up the armour of your robotic players, their names strangely change into English text. It's daunting at first,but simple really, once you get the hang of it.

The attributes of each of the team members is displayed in this box. Things like agility, stamina etc can be increased by selecting the bottom option on a percentage power-up screen.

In the corner is the name of your player in Japanese. To get to the power-up screen, highlight the matching bit of text and press A. There are four things to power-up now: Pitcher, runner and batter armour, and grouped attributes.

'Safe!' calls the robotic linesman as you slide into the base plate (there is *some* token speech). The fabulous spot animations from the original game have been kept in!

The team members in the different leagues vary from the strapping great *Speedball*-type chaps to these, well, strapping great girls with golden flowing locks.

Exciting or Fighting? Now then, it's a tricky one this. We prefer the fighting one ourselves, although we haven't come across the landmines from the original game yet, so we don't know if they exist.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Just stop right there! Don't move a muscle! I bet you were going to turn to the next page, weren't you? After all, who wants to read about a baseball game, right? Well, don't (skip the page, that is) – you'd be making a mistake.

Actually, I wouldn't normally blame you for being bored with baseball releases. There *are* about 150 of them on the SNES already, and about 148 of them are useless. In fact, if it wasn't for the Neo Geo I'd be convinced that ball games were invented just to fill out shelf space in games shops. After all, nobody ever buys them, surely?

So why is the Neo Geo such a worthy exception when it comes to baseball games? It's hard to say, except that Neo Geo creators SNK have plugged away at the subject, finding a formula that works both here and in *Baseball Stars 1* and *2*. All three are proof that the game *can* be brilliant fun when properly converted.

Not that 'properly converted' is a phrase that springs to mind when talking about *2020 Super Baseball*. Its futuristic look probably owes as much to the likes of *Speedball* as it does to other baseball games – it plays fast and loose with the 'real' rules to good effect. It's also technically excellent – very close in almost every way to the excellent Neo Geo original. Graphics are spot on, with lovely shading and colour, and – surprisingly – the size of the graphics has been maintained too. Throughout, the SNES version of *2020 Baseball* features just as huge, brilliantly-animated, and imaginative robotic players as the Neo Geo model. Add to this the superb stills that crop up, and the fast and smooth scrolling field, and you have a great-looking game – unknown in the existing Super NES baseball arena.

And it doesn't stop there. *2020* may lack some of the technical finesse of the original, with annoying music, limited speech and occasional slow-down, but it still combines the speed, power and gameplay depth that made it such a hit. While the one-player league is challenging and enjoyable, it really comes into its own in the two-player games, which are fantastic. Trying to run out players as they sneak between bases – or trying to avoid being run out – both work brilliantly. The dynamic controls are a great help too, making the game simple and fun to pick up and go. If I do have any gripe at all, it's with the over-zealous fielders, who catch out clumsy swingers with ease. This can be very annoying, but you do have a reasonable degree of control over the hitter (or batter), and give-away shots are often the mistake of the player rather than the result of a limited control system.

As you've probably gathered, *2020* is a great game. A challenging one-player league and a *brilliant* two-player mode offer what is perhaps some of the best competitive sporting action on the machine. Hurrah for KAC, and roll on *Baseball Stars 2*!

● Jason Brookes

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
90%	74%	84%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	85%
86%		

VERDICT: 85% for a baseball game – it's outrageous! Well, it would be if *2020 Super Baseball* wasn't the slick, challenging and hugely enjoyable game it is. Fabulous with two players, this *isn't* baseball as you know it. We've got a great Neo Geo conversion at last!

Thanks to Console Concepts, (0782) 712 759, for the loan of this cart.

OUTLANDER

Still plugging *two* cartridges into your Super Nintendo? Then don't any longer. With *Outlander* you can play a driving game *and* a beat-'em-up – and go! (Quickly.)

UK Release

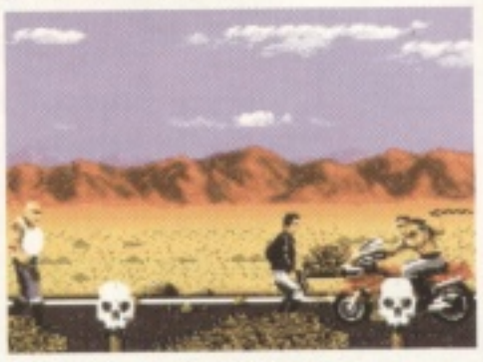
Game: Outlander
Publisher: Mindscape
Developer: In-house
Price: £TBA
Release: June
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Well, here we are in The Driving Bit. Notable features here are The Car, The Road, The Black-And-White Barriers (we're still not quite sure what they're doing there, but someone's obviously gone to a lot of trouble to position them as awkwardly as possible) and lastly The Motorbikes, which you shoot or ram off the road.

A handy map to show you where you are, and where you're going.

Yawn! This *is* fun, isn't it?

After a bit there'll be this beeping noise and your indicators will start flashing. This is your signal to pull over, whereupon you'll enter (tarrantarra)...



The Beat-'Em-Up Bit. Walk from left to right shooting people and picking up extra ammo and energy. If you run out of ammo, press 'punch' instead.

DIE, MOTORCYCLISTS, DIE!

During *Outlander*'s driving sections, your objective is to kill as many motorcyclists as possible (although *Outlander*'s motorcyclists seem to cause far less trouble than real-life ones do). There are a number of ways you can go about this:

1) Firing your guns. This will sometimes cause them to blow up.

2) Shooting them from the side when they draw up next to you.

3) Ramming into them from behind, making their wheels fall off and fly up into the air.

4) Bashing into them from the side.

Oh yes, sheep can be treated in a similar fashion.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

Good, bad or ugly? There's absolutely no doubt about it – *Outlander*'s Ugly. (With, you'll note, a capital 'U'.) And that can largely be put down to the fact that it's trying to be all things to every man. Or, at least, two things to every Super Nintendo owner.

The thing this game's trying to be most, and fails least at being, is a driving game. And, as you'll be able to see from our screenshots, it's very much a real old-fashioned, computer gamey sort of driving game, a bit like *Top Gear* without the high speed, two-player fun. The impression of speed is minimal – the road seems to move at exactly the same speed no matter how fast you're supposedly going – so it looks really weird when your car starts skidding into the various obstacles at the side of the road, even when you could have sworn you were barely moving.

The only really promising bits in the driving part of *Outlander* are the motorcyclist death sequences. They're actually really well done, though even avid motorbike-haters will have to admit that they're in questionable taste. And once you've seen 10 or 20 leather-clad ruffians go under your wheels you'll start looking around for other entertainment. (The hilarious sheep death sequences kept us amused for a *bit*, though.)

The one place you won't find it is in *Outlander*'s alter ego – its beat-'em-up side. While the driving bits are merely mediocre, this part's utterly appalling. And it's difficult to say exactly why, simply because there's nothing much there to talk about. You just walk from left to right, stoop occasionally to pick something up, press 'fire' every time someone walks onto the screen, hit people when you run out of ammo, and get hit back. It's sooooo dull.

Outlander really isn't a lot of fun. Quite where all those Mbits went I really don't know, as there's nothing in there to hold your attention for more than a couple of minutes. *Outlander*? Out... out... erm... outRAGEOUS, more like!

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
50%	21%	30%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	
19%		28%

VERDICT: A very poor effort. It's fun watching all the motorcyclists getting killed, but only for a minute or two. The actual game itself is... well, there isn't one, to be honest. Not that we can find.

SUPER STRIKE EAGLE

Is it a flight simulation? Or is it an arcade game? It doesn't really matter either way, to be honest, as *Super Strike Eagle* isn't very good.

US Release

Game: Super Strike Eagle
Publisher: MicroProse
Developer: In-house
Price: Approx. £45
Release: Out now
Players: 1
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

Here's your Strike Eagle, flying along. It differs from an ordinary Eagle in that it strikes things, with bombs and missiles. Bang, crash, it goes. Boom! *Super Strike Eagle* gives you lots of things to strike and all the bombs and rockets you could ever need to do it with.

Here's your mission briefing, telling you what you're going to be blowing up and where you'll find it. There'll be lots of targets on each mission, and you may need to keep popping back to the aircraft carrier for an ammo top-up.

Planes being planes, the first thing you'll need to do is take off from the aircraft carrier. (*From an aircraft carrier? In an F-15? – Accuracy-conscious Ed.*)

You'll encounter the odd enemy plane or two along the way, and you'll have to take them on in this poor aerial combat section.

The high-point of the game is when you actually get to fly around over the target area, launching missiles all over the place. Although it's hardly brilliant.

And here we are over the target area. Fly the plane towards the target you want to attack first, keeping a beady eye out for any enemy planes and surface-to-air missiles. Then, er, let it have it.

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

If you've played *F-15 Strike Eagle* on the Amiga or PC, and you're hoping for something similar on the Super NES, you're going to be very disappointed. Sensibly realising that the bare-bones SNES isn't up to handling all the 3D polygons usually used in flight sims (but, unwisely, perhaps, deciding not to wait for the arrival of the Super FX chip, with which they could have managed a perfect reproduction of the Amiga version), Microprose have kept the *Strike Eagle* name but produced a new, more arcadey, game. And, to be honest, I'm not impressed.

As far as I can tell, the problem is that there's no proper focus to the game. If they'd concentrated on the ground-attack sequences (which are the best bits), maybe giving them a more from-behind-the-plane view (like in *Pilotwings*), we might have something here. But no. Their resources have instead been spread too thinly, and as a result none of it's that good.

Take the ground-attack bits, for example. Because you're looking at things from overhead, you can only see a tiny area of the ground at once, so it's very hard to get your bearings. And the plane handles ridiculously, nothing like a real one, so you can't use proper ground attack tactics – swooping down on the target, for example – like you would in a proper flight sim. And the dogfighting bits are appalling – what's that horrible grey-blue mess? And what's happened to the Immelman turns, yo-yos and and so on that appear in real dogfights?

I can't wait to see the first proper Super FX chip-based SNES flight sim, and I really hope MicroProse are the ones to do it, as they've been behind all my favourite Amiga aeroplane games. A version of *Knights Of The Sky* would be just the ticket, or a real *Strike Eagle* game. *Super Strike Eagle*, though, is a very poor stop-gap, and I couldn't honestly recommend it.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
60%	78%	59%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	61%
63%		

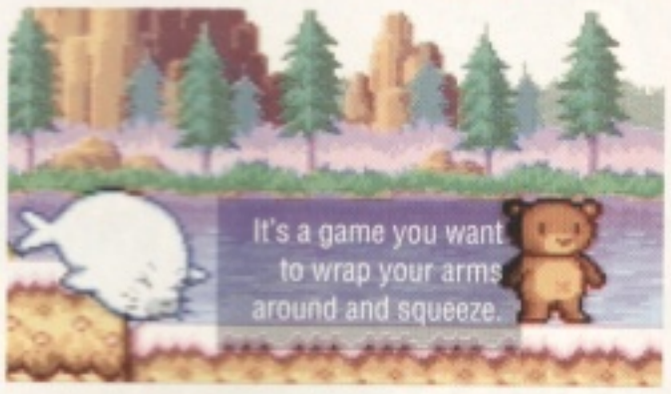
VERDICT: A real let-down next to its Amiga- and PC-based namesakes. It has its moments, but they're few and far between.

SYO THE SEAL

Japanese Release

Game: Syo The Seal
Publisher: Takara
Price: Approx. £50-£60
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

The map screen. Squeak!



Squeaky squeak! Syo's manners aren't everything one would hope, but it's difficult to be cross with him. Squeak! (*Help! – Ed.*)

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The quest to create the World's Cutest Game continues with *Syo The Seal*, which steals a march on the competition by placing a baby seal pup in the lead role. He's incredibly cute, especially when he's hanging off the edge of a platform waggling his little furry flippers, and the little squeaky noise he makes even out-cutes the cats in the underwater section of *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*. None of the baddies are particularly cute, but the things Syo's got to collect *are* – baby rabbits, little fluffy chicks, that sort of thing.

All the instructions are in Japanese, so I've got no idea what the story-line is, or who the chap who accompanies Syo on the inter-level map is. But *Syo The Seal* is very playable, as it's really just a simple platform game. And it's fun, too. Some of the levels can seem rather big and empty at times, but there are lots of novel ideas in it, and the weird water-based bonus game keeps one's interest up. The graphics, too, are neat, although the game's a bit on the easy side.

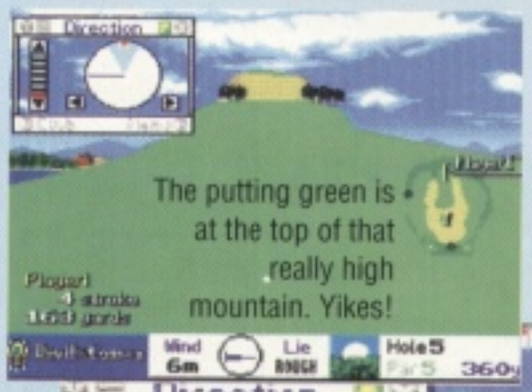
It's unlikely that many copies of *Syo The Seal* will make to the UK, as it's pretty obscure. If you do see it, though, and fancy trying something a little 'different'...

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
80%	75%	70%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	79%
81%		

VERDICT: A bit off-beat, and unlikely to make a big impression in the UK, but irresistibly cute, with the playability to back it up. It gets our 'seal' of approval! (*Oh dear – Ed.*)

DEVIL'S COURSE



The putting green is at the top of that really high mountain. Yikes!

Oddly, despite *Devil's Course*'s wide-ranging selection of weird and wonderful courses, for some reason we've elected to show you the two most boring ones. Sorry.

Japanese Release

Game: Devil's Course
Publisher: T&E Soft
Price: Approx. £50-£60
Cart ROM: 8 Mbit

GOOD, BAD OR UGLY?

The odd thing about *Devil's Course*, as you'll be able to see if you study the pictures closely, is that it starts off looking like an ordinary golf game, and then gives you this really weird course to play on, with massive cliffs, really-hard-to-reach holes on top of mountains, obstacles hovering in mid-air and all sorts of other irregularities.

But apart from the unusual course, *Devil's Course* is just the same as T&E's other True Golf Classics games (*Pebble Beach*, *Waialae Country Club* and *Augusta Masters*, which are generally agreed to be about the best Super Nintendo golf games) – the controls work just the same, which is no bad thing, the graphics are drawn speedily, the menus are as impossibly Japanese as they always are, and the music is even more like a porn movie's than ever before (according to Jason, anyway).

You certainly wouldn't want this to be the only golf game in your collection, because what it gains in wackiness it loses in proper golfing atmosphere, but it makes an interesting change from 'the norm' and is pretty much an essential purchase for anyone who's cultivating a collection of golf games.

● Jonathan Davies

GRAPHICS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY
84%	55%	85%
GAMELIFE	OVERALL SCORE:	80%
73%		

VERDICT: Just as playable as *Pebble Beach* and chums, but with a really bizarre set of holes to play on. Lots of fun, but not a sensible first choice if you're after a golf game.

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Make the most of your Super Nintendo – try out a Competition Pro Pad at this amazing low price. Also on offer this month: the fab QJ Topfighter (see our joystick review in SP7), and these other essential accessories for top game playing.

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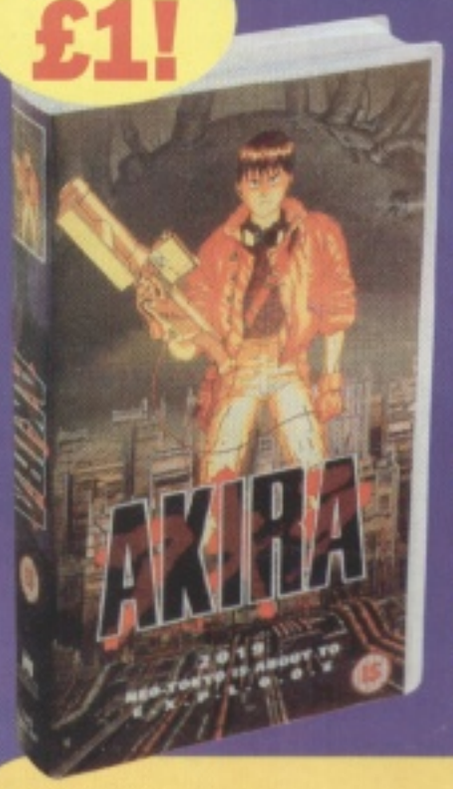

QJ TOPFIGHTER

If you're playing *Street Fighter II* without one of these, you're simply not playing *Street Fighter II*. Not properly, anyway. It's absolutely essential, with its tough metal casing, steel shaft, arcade-style buttons, rapid fire and slow motion. It can be programmed with up to three combos too. In short, it's the business! **£64.99**

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What more can we say to convince you to buy a copy of this visually stunning, action packed, full-length Japanese feature film rendered in top quality Japanese anime. (*I think that'll do it – Ed.*) An absolute bargain at only... **£11.99**

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GAMEFREAK

SNES TECH & GAMING ANSWERS

by Jason Brookes

He's game. He's a freak. He's, er, here to answer all your Super Nintendo questions (as long as they're not *all* about PAL and SCART, of course, although he knows everything about that too). (*I never wanted to be a Gamefreak, you know. I wanted to be an airline pilot – GF.*) (*Sorry about this – Ed.*)

Dear Gamefreak,
1) Now that the Super FX chip is available to programmers, will some of the older 3D graphic games such as *Midwinter 1 & 2* and *Damocles* be converted onto the Super Famicom? I know it's a bit old now, but *Damocles* is still my all-time favourite game.
2) Will there be a sequel to my favourite shooter, *Axelay*?
3) Why does the UK version of *Street Fighter II* crash occasionally when run on a Japanese Super Famicom using a universal adaptor?
4) Why did you choose Chun Li as the best *SFII* character? Surely Guile could kick the stuffing out of her without even sweating?
5) Are there any half decent Neo Geo games being converted to the Super Famicom? *Fatal Fury* and *King Of The Monsters* were okay, but had crap sound and bad controls.
6) The Mega Drive has the excellent *Buck Rogers*, the Amiga has the fairly entertaining *Laser Squad*. Will there be any half-decent strategy games such as these on the Super Famicom in the foreseeable future?
Graham Pearson, Weymouth.

1) Personally I'd prefer to see a version of *Stunt Car Racer* using the Super FX chip, possibly with a split-screen. Can you imagine how much fun that would be? To be honest, it's extremely unlikely that any of the games you mention will ever appear on the Super Nintendo, Super FX chip or not, simply because they're so old. That doesn't mean that similar stuff might not appear though.
2) It's rumoured to be in the pipeline, but they might just save it for the CD ROM. After all, the original *Axelay*'s graphics really pushed the Super Nintendo's hardware (you could see that from the occasional sprite slow-down) and to do anything significantly better would need the processing boost that CD ROM will provide.
3) All UK games are meant to run at 50 Hz, and so occasional problems will occur when they're running at 60 Hz on the Japanese Super Famicom or US SNES. We've come across more problems this way round than when running foreign games on a UK console.

Dear Gamefreak,
I am a big fan of Japanese animation, and think the whole look of your mag is individual and effective. In fact, two friends of mine bought it for the cover artwork alone – and they own Mega Drives! I've a few queries though:
1) Your Japanese correspondent is fantastic, but he *does* need to put slightly more emphasis on games. Maybe he could remedy this?
2) I think it's a shame that Acclaim are releasing a game based on *Alien 3* instead of the series' far superior second incarnation, *Aliens*. The third film is an inferior effort all round. What do you think?
3) Whatever happened to the SF-1 – you know, the Super-Famicom-and-Sharp-TV combination that was only available in Japan? (See pic.)
4) Lastly, I would like to know how you answer everyone's questions with such tireless nobility and friendly co-operation? *Super Play* is definitely destined for a shining platinum-like status among the bustling crowds of lesser magazines littering the newsstands. (*Steady on! – Ed.*)
Sayonara!
Matt Squibbs.

1) He already has! We sent him a warning that if he didn't stop wibbling on about things like Ai Chans and Super Cat Girl Nuku Nukus, we'd get the Yakuza onto him. You'll notice now that games are the main focus of Live From Hell City. (See page 14.)
2) Yes, I agree – I hated the third *Alien* film too. That said, it doesn't really seem to have spoiled the game – it's a fab-looking platform shoot-'em-up that could easily be based on any of the films.
3) It was a really neat idea at the time, but was only really suitable for tiny Japanese houses where there usually isn't even the space for a Super Famicom to sit next to the telly! I can't imagine how the CD ROM system will be attached to it, either.
4) Aw, shucks. Thanks for the praise Matt, but I'm just doing my job.

4) Chun Li (see pic below) was chosen for purely, um, artistic reasons – she just looks so great. When it comes down to it, Ryu's actually my own personal favourite character to play.
5) *2220 Baseball* is probably the best so far, with *Art Of Fighting* looking okay and *Sengoku* further down the line. Generally, I hope companies stick to converting the sports stuff like the excellent *Baseball Stars 1 & 2* (these tend to be the best Neo games), but I'd really like to see the brilliant *R-Type* clone, *Last Resort*, too. Yes, it *does* slow down (and no doubt would on Super Nintendo too), but it's still a brilliant game.
6) I asked JD but he told me to go away. (He was engrossed in the Japanese version of *Sim Ant* and wasn't enjoying himself very much.) To the best of my knowledge there *are* a few strategy thingies on the way:

Baseball Stars 2 on the Neo – a chance of a conversion?

Sim Earth is due very soon on US import, and after that we have games like *Super Conflict*, *Dominus*, *Full Metal Planet*, *Metal Marines* and *Sim Ant* on the way too.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) In issue 5, Andrew Buchan from London asked about the model number of the Hitachi TV shown in issue 1 running a full-screen US SNES. You replied by saying you'd find out the model number and would print it in issue 6, but I couldn't find it anywhere – I am going blind, or are we getting a bit forgetful?
2) After reading the first few issues of *Super Play* I decided to sell my UK SNES and get a US one. When I looked into the cart slot, I saw the two plastic purple tabs which you said could be removed with a pair of pliers. These tabs actually seem too firmly fixed – is there another way?
3) How will future CD games work on CD ROM units from other countries (eg Japanese CD games played on the UK system)?
Brett Seldon, Hants.

1) Ah, yes. I must admit, I forgot. It's actually Matt's TV, and it's a Hitachi model number C25 P228 with a SCART socket. Like many TVs it says 50 Hz on the back, but actually displays a 60 Hz image from a Japanese or a US machine perfectly. *Many* modern full-size TVs are like this – if you're looking for a TV to run such a machine on, take it into a TV shop and try it out. Often it's the best way to be sure.
2) The other way is to get something very hot that will melt away the plastic. A soldering iron is perfect for this, but be sure to do it somewhere that's well ventilated though. Be careful too!
3) It's very unlikely that Super Nintendo CDs will be compatible across CD ROM units from different countries. The reasons for this are, firstly, that there will be a software protection system built into both the CDs and the units to prevent grey importing. Also, the speed differences between PAL (UK) and NTSC (US and Japanese) systems will cause problems. There is a possibility that Japanese and US CD ROMs will be compatible though, because Nintendo kept the US and Japanese cartridge systems compatible (apart from the different shaped carts and slots). If this happens, then both the Japanese or US CD ROMs will be very desirable bits of hardware.

Dear Gamefreak,
1) A friend of mine recently visited the US for a holiday and, while he was there, he attended a small electronics/computer fair where he purchased an adaptor that all but eliminates slow-down on Super Nintendo cartridges. The adaptor works in much the same way as the universal-type adaptors sold in this country – ie the adaptor goes in the cartridge slot, and a cartridge goes on top of it.

This may sound a bit fanciful, but I've actually seen it working (by the way, it'll only fit into the cart slot of a US machine). I've played *Gradius III* and *Dinosaurs*, and slow-down is virtually eliminated (the 'wheel' bits on *Dinosaurs* don't slow at all now). The adaptor came with a leaflet which says it contains 'Z processors', similar to the one found in the SNES itself, and that these come into play when the SNES's processor becomes overloaded. The whole game doesn't speed up, only the bits where the processor can't cope.

Anyway, to the main point of my letter. Is an equivalent 'Super Speed Cartridge' (that's what it's called, by the way, and is manufactured by Sauda Electronics, price $75) going to be available for UK machines? If so, when? And how much it cost? I've phoned around several UK companies, and no-one seems to know anything at all about the product. Please help.
Alex Finch, Hertfordshire.

Hmm. I'm not sure I believe a word of this one. You see, before every slow-down whinger in the country gets too excited, I've mentioned this little story to Ed Semrad, the Editor of *Electronic Gaming Monthly* (America's biggest video game magazine) and he hasn't heard anything about it (and believe me, he gets to hear *all* the rumours). Now, if such a company had manufactured and already started selling such a revolutionary device, you'd have thought they'd be onto the magazines like a shot, wouldn't you? You can you imagine how popular such a gadget would be. Basically, until we actually see it working before our eyes, I'm tempted to file this under 'April Fools'. Stay tuned.

Dear Gamefreak,
I read the article in *Super Play* in issue 4 on how cheap Super NES games are in Germany with keen interest, as I have lived in Germany since November. In fact, when I first discovered I was going to be moving there, I phoned the Nintendo hotline and Bandai to ask about compatibility. The result was two frighteningly similar phone calls:

Me: I was wondering, do German SNES games work on the UK SNES?
Them: No.
Me: Why not?
Them: They are on a different system.
Me: Will they work with an adaptor?
Them: You can't buy adaptors.

At this point I hung up. When I arrived in Germany, I bought *Street Fighter II* and *Mario Kart* for 99 Deutsch Marks each (£41.25 at the current exchange rate) and they both work fine. However, most games are priced at around DM129 (£53.75). So, I'm off to phone Bandai to accuse them of lying, which should be fun! Now here's a couple of questions:
1) Have you any news about the Mega Drive/SNES adaptor?
2) Me and my mates have all been hoping for a Super Nintendo version of *Elite*, the class space trader. Do you reckon there will be a version for the SNES?
Edward Howson, Dorset. (*I thought you said you lived in Germany – Ed.*)

German carts work fine in the UK SNES because the security chips and speed configuration of the hardware are the same. As for the response you got from Bandai and the Nintendo Hotline, it seems likely that things will improve over the next few months now that Nintendo are taking the helm. (Then again, maybe they won't.)
1) No news at all, I'm afraid. To be honest, it seems unlikely to me that the unit will ever appear at all – its very existence would seriously infringe on both Sega's and Nintendo's hardware copyright.
2) Some good news here – Konami currently hold the rights to produce the sequel, *Elite 2*, for the SNES. They've hinted that they'll probably save it for CD ROM treatment, but this ain't definite – we'll have to wait and see if it turns up. It's unlikely that the original game will appear, though – it's much too long in the tooth.

***Elite 2* on the Amiga – Konami hold the rights for the Super Famicom conversion, so expect something polished if it ever appears.**

WHO KNOWS EVERYTHING?

That's right – it's the Gamefreak. He's willing to help you out with any Super Nintendo-related game questions – all you need do is write to him at Gamefreak, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We'll print you an answer as soon as we possibly can.

NEW COLUMN

DAYDREAMING

Are you bored in your job? Do you spend school lessons in another world? Maybe you dream up new game ideas all the time. If you do, I want to hear them. To get you into the swing of things, here's what we managed to come up with...

Jason: 'Me, I'd really like to see a version of *Darius* on CD ROM, with amazingly detailed graphics like the first coin-op (but much better), and some interesting additions such as an even bigger map. Adding a few space stations where you could dock to buy weapons and get advice on the best routes through the game would be neat too. It would be a giant shoot-'em-up, with lots of depth and absolutely oozing atmosphere.'

Matt: 'I'd like to see Mario and all his chums in a violent shoot-'em-up, like *Super Probotector*, where he's carrying a huge gun and blasting everything in his path. For the two-player mode, Yoshi could join in, taking out Koopas with his flame-thrower and grenades. You could call it *Mario Contra*.'

The Gamefreak's dream: a CD ROM version of *Darius*.

JD: 'How about an *F-Zero 2*, using the Super FX chip to create tunnels, skyscrapers and really smooth 3D cars? There could be menacing, futuristic juggernauts to overtake, and really enormous jumps to make...'

You see how easy it is? Write to Daydreaming at the usual address (keep it short) and we'll print the best ones.

MODE 7

CALLING ALL CHEATS, CRACKERS, AND GAME FREAKS!

Welcome to Mode 7, this time back up to four (well, almost four) pages, and absolutely packed with tips and cheats for your favourite Super Nintendo games. If you're stuck on some tricky level of your latest purchase, this is the first place to come for help to get you through. We're running cheats on older games too, so hopefully there'll be something for everyone in here. Plus, we've got Ask Ade, our gameplay advice column – write to him with your gameplay problems, and he'll do his best to help you out.

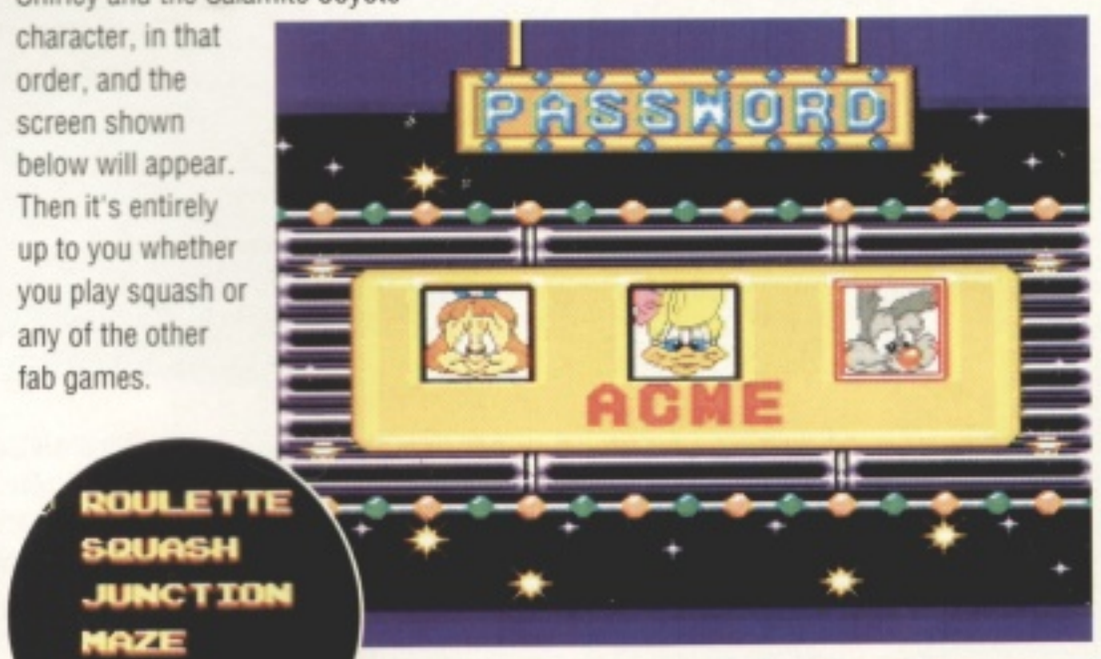
Remember though, while we uncover many tips ourselves, Mode 7 couldn't be written without your help. Send your best cheats to the address below, and you could win a *Super Play* T-shirt, or even a fabulous (and functional) *Super Play* pen. The address, as ever, is: Mode 7, *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW. We look forward to hearing from you!

TINY TOON ADVENTURES

(Konami)

The bonus rounds in this fantastic little platform romp are actually games in themselves. Fortunately, Konami had the goodwill to include a handy cheat that allows you to select them on their own if you want to. Here's how you do it:

When you get to the password screen just enter the faces of Elmyra, Shirley and the Calamite Coyote character, in that order, and the screen shown below will appear. Then it's entirely up to you whether you play squash or any of the other fab games.



A winning combination of critters. Enter the following faces and the bonus rounds are yours for the choosing.

FLYING HERO

(Sofel)

A bit 'run-of-the-mill' according to our review in issue 6, but we enjoyed *Flying Hero* all the same. What we didn't know at the time was that there is a hidden stage select included in the game to let you select any one of the eight levels.

Also included are options to increase both lives and continues. All you have to do is, first, select the option screen (we didn't know this existed either!) by pressing select on the intro or title sequence. Then, on the second joypad, press SELECT and START at the same time and the screen below will appear. Now progress can be made.

Tough shoot-'em-ups need one of these!

And to prove it works, here's the seventh level – we didn't get this far before.

ASK ADE

INVALUABLE MONTHLY GAMING ADVICE

Oh dear – seems like I've been found out. Despite what you may have been thinking, I'm not infallible as far as Super NES games are concerned after all. You see, in issue 6 I told Leigh Morgan that there was no cheat for *Sim City*, and I was wrong. There is, you see – I've printed it just below.

So okay, mistakes do creep in occasionally – but that doesn't mean most of what I say isn't 100% accurate, and that other readers can help out wonderfully at the bits where I get stuck. With no more ado, then, onto a revised answer to Leigh's problem, and the rest of this month's queries.

● **Leigh Morgan's *Sim City* problem, revisited.**

Right, here's the real solution to Leigh's problem from issue 6. (At this point I have to add that about 10 people wrote in and picked up on my mistake, so no individual thanks to anyone, but thanks guys – you know who you are.)

Okay, here's what you do: Spend all your money building lots of important things like police and fire departments, and wait around until the tax and funding review in December. Bring all the tax down to 0%, along with all the fundings. Then press and hold down the L button (on top of the joypad for those in doubt) and 'Go with figures'. Now go back to the tax and funding screen, and put the funding up to 100%. Again 'Go with figures' and wait until January. Now let go of the L button and you should have $999,999. You're sorted! I hope that fixes things for you.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

Dear Ade

Are there any cheats for the UK version of *Axelay*, as I can't get past the boss on level five?

Tim Frost, Surrey.

Ade Says:

A Musgrove of Chesterfield, and quite a few other people, asked the same question as Tim. So here goes.

For invincibility, press START twice during the game, wait for a second then press START again. Now press SELECT, UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT Y, B, X, A. Then unpause the game. If you've done this correctly, your lives should be replaced by the word Mutek (see top screenshot). Also, if you keep pressing UP and DOWN on the start/ options screen you'll be able to access a level code (see the bottom left-hand corner of the screenshot above!).

Q*BERT 3

(NTVIC)

Fans of this classic (but slightly weird) puzzle game will be thrilled to hear of this equally weird cheat to go with it. Go to the option screen, press L and R and then let go – a programmer screen will appear, and by pressing SELECT you can change the background. Press START to return to the option screen. Okay, so it's not that brilliant, but it's a cheat, isn't it?

Why on earth you'd want to look at all these psychedelic wallpaper samples is beyond us, but what the hell, we've told you how.

CONTRA III

(Konami)

A really tough and addictive shoot-'em-ûp, *Contra III* could definitely do with a level select. So – phew! – isn't it good that we've got one here? Press DOWN, DOWN-LEFT and LEFT, then START, on the title screen, and – yes! – you'll be into the level select bit. Hurrah! (By the way, this particular cheat will only work on the American version of *Contra III*.)

Play on any level you want, without having to do the work to get to them!

F1 EXHAUST HEAT

(Ocean/Seta)

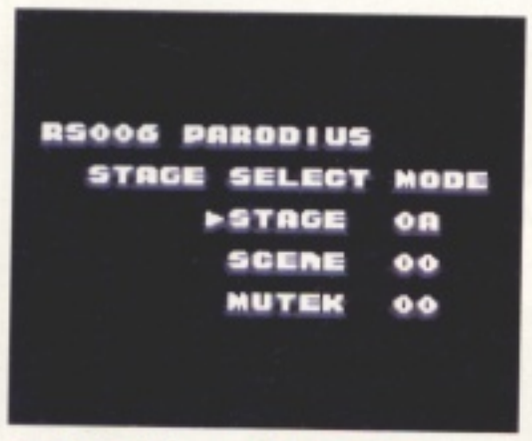
For a turbo boost at any time during a race, press L and R simultaneously to zoom up to 400kph. This should make coming first a *lot* easier.

Win by a mile with this cheat.

SUPER PARODIUS

(Konami)

Oh yes, we love this game – it may be a shoot-'em-up, but it's just sooooo cute. Anyway, on the ship select screen, go down to the ship that is placed below Vic Viper (the octopus one) and press UP, L and X simultaneously. Now hold them for about half a minute (aching fingers time!) and a stage select screen will appear.



Here's that stage select screen!

DESERT STRIKE

(Electronic Arts)

This great shoot-'em-up may not be very difficult, but going through the game in one go can be a real pain. Lucky, then, that we've got the passwords for each stage for you:

Stage 1: 3ZJMZT7, Stage 2: K32L82R, Stage 3: JR8P8M8, Stage 4: F9N5CJ8

Okay, so it's not that hard a game to finish, but we've made it even easier.

STREET FIGHTER II

(Capcom)

No good at *Street Fighter II*? Then you'll just have to practice more, won't you? (*Careful... – Ed.*) Okay, okay – there *is* something else you can do. Try entering the Championship Mode cheat (DOWN, L, UP, R, Y and B) and set the difficulty setting to 2. After you beat Bison, but before the picture fades away, press START and R simultaneously to see the character ending. There – now you can see the level seven endings, without having to fight your way all the way through level seven.

Dear Ade,

I'm having some trouble on *Zelda III* – I can't find the Blue Cane. Can you help?
Colin Morrison, Perth, Scotland.

Ade Says:

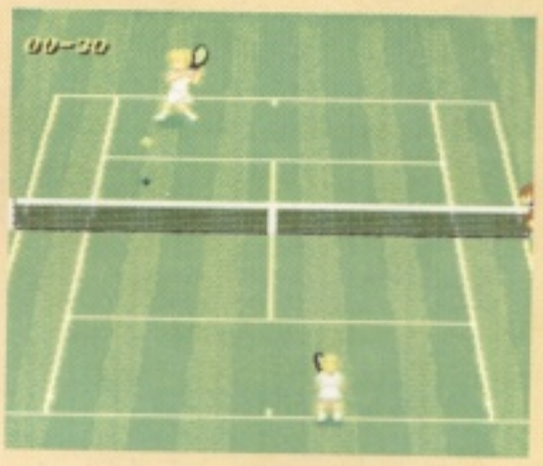
I certainly can. Use the warp tile, found in the middle of the three big stones and the three small ones at the top of the mountain, to enter the Dark World. Walk south to the edge of the cliff and jump down onto the ledge. Now go into the cave, and smash the barricade with your magic hammer. Run across the spikes (if you have the magic cape, wear that) and you're almost there. You'll also need Titan's Mitt to lift the block, underneath which you'll find the cane.

Dear Ade,

I'm having some trouble on *Super Tennis*. I can't even beat the easiest players. Is there any easy way to do it?
Stuart Feeney, Knaresborough.

Ade Says:

Paul Foulkes of Liverpool asked me the same thing. If you've got issue 1 of *Super Play* look in there – my players guide



explains it. But if you haven't, try this trick. On the character selection screen, use the second controller and press the L button five times and then press X. Press the R button seven times and then press X again. The music will have changed and whichever player you choose, they'll be the best.

Dear Ade,

I can't get past lesson eight on *Pilotwings* – I just seem to lose it every time. Could you please give me a code so that I can get past this level? Also, could you also tell me how many levels there are on *Super Mario World*. Some people say there are 96, others say 100. Who is right?
Philip Harrison, Kent.

Ade Says:

Use the code 882943 and you'll be on the last level of *Pilotwings* – Secret Command 2. And as for *Mario World*, there are only 96 levels. No more, no less

LOST SOULS

Dear Ade,

I'm my hair out playing *Xandra's Big Adventure*. You know where the Princess starts crying and you get swept away by water? How do I get past this level?
Michael Bourne, Barnsley.

Ade Says:

Sorry, but I've never played *Xandra* (it's got too much Japanese text in it for me), so I'm not sure what you're getting at. Can anyone else help??

Dear Ade,

Help! I'm playing *Soul Blazer*, and all I need is the Emblem G, in Dr. Leo's Laboratory. I have travelled through all the pipes, model town's nooks and crannies, and everywhere else I can think of, but to no avail. Does anybody know where it is?
Roy Cooper, Surrey.

Ade Says:

That's a very good question. *Does* anybody know?

Dear Ade,

On *Lemmings* SUNSOFT 5, I'm completely stuck. Can you please help me out?
Craig Steele, Keighley.

Ade Says:

Sorry, I can't do the later levels myself either. Anybody?

Well, that's all we've got room for this month. Send in your gameplay problems, or your help for this month's Lost Souls, to Ask Ade, *Super Play*, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

ACTION REPLAY CODES

To take advantage of these neat Action Replay-compatible tips, you will, of course, need your very own Action Replay cartridge. One of the simplest ways to get one is to take advantage of our offer on page 73 (so we'll see you here when you get back, OK?)

SUPER TENNIS

7E01 0E01 – Player 1 has 00 points
7E01 0E08 – Invisible players
7E00 0200 – Weird Court
7E01 7010 – Invisible Court (no white lines)

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST

7E03 5F01 – Infinite Time
7E03 7202 – Infinite Lives
7E02 B10A – Start with 10 hearts

SPIDER-MAN AND THE X-MEN

7E01 0003 – Infinite lives
7E10 F880 – Invincibility for Spiderman
7E0B 297F – Infinite energy for Wolverine, Cyclops and air supply for Storm
7E11 9E68 – Infinite energy for Gambit

STREET FIGHTER II

7E1A 5A09
7E0C C1E0 – Play as M. Bison (choose Ryu or Ken)
7E1A 5A0B
7E0C C1E0 – Play as Vega (choose Chun Li only)

THE ROCKETEER

(IGS)

On the title screen of *The Rocketeer* press L, R, L, R and DOWN and you will hear a sound (you'll recognise it when you hear it). Now choose the number of players you want, and then press START to select your round. Cheers to Keith Lacey in Dublin for that cracking tip – a *Super Play* pen is in the post.

Pick your players *and* the round.

SUPER SOCCER

(Human/Nintendo)

To select the superb – and well 'ard – Nintendo team in a one-player vs two-player game in *Super Soccer*, player two needs to press START and B on the team select screen.

Like that one, eh? Then here's yet another cheat for you. For two people to play as the same team, move player two to the team he wants to be (say, England), then press START and B to select the Nintendo team. Now, move player one to England and then, by pressing Y on player two's pad, he will cancel the Nintendo selection and become England too. The second player will be dressed in the away strip. We've all got Paul Carey from Wilslow in Cheshire to thank for these nifty tips. (So say thank you then.) And you'll shortly be receiving a *Super Play* pen for your trouble, Paul.

And – yes! – here's that very same team select screen.

HUMAN GRAND PRIX

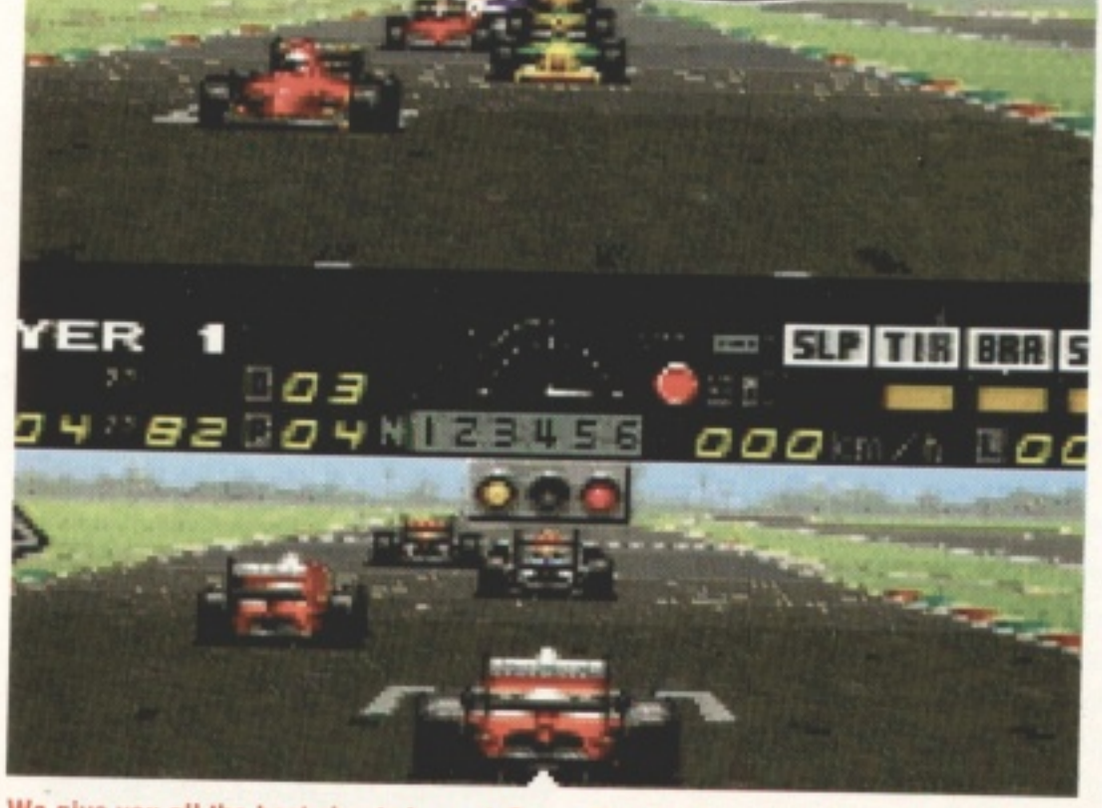
(Human)

This is without a doubt a brilliant game, but most people would agree it's also really difficult to control. It's not impossible, however – especially if you follow these neat tips from driving expert and Super Nintendo fan RJ Faragher (who forgot to tell us where he comes from). Cheers, RJ.

To execute a controlled spin
Hold down the accelerator and the brake at the same time, then select LEFT or RIGHT on the pad, and release the brake. The car then spins and smoke pours out from the tyres, but it'll get you back into the race a lot quicker.

What to do if you make a bad start
If you've got off to a bad start which is going to set you right towards the back of the pack, try to cause a major accident on the first lap. If you succeed, a red flag will be drawn, stopping the race, and you'll get the chance to try again.

Smoke billowing from the tyres after a spin.

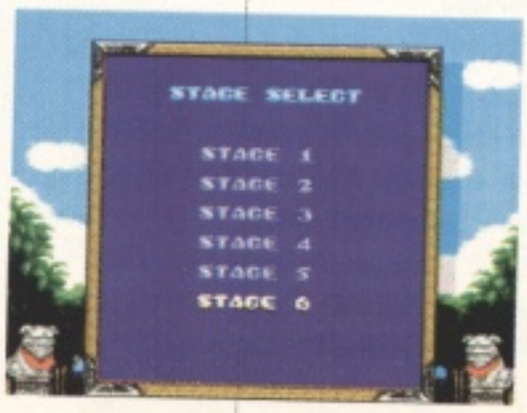


We give you all the best cheats here at *Super Play*. Like this great one for more control in *Human Grand Prix*.

KIKIKAIKAI

(Natsume)

This is such a tough little shoot-'em-up that we didn't realise just how great the later levels were until we found this built-in level select. On the character select screen, while holding down X and Y, press A, A, A, A, B, B, B, B, A, B, A, B, A, B, A, B. Now press START and choose your level! And that's not all. Raymond Chan from East Barnet, Herts found some bonuses. Shoot the largest lily pad on level one, and three gods will appear and shower you with bonuses. On the same level, sweep at the boss' bowl for an extra life. On level two blow up the raft with a turtle on it and on level four hit the bird on the tree. These result in more goodies.



These piccies haven't a great deal to do with the bonuses, but they look pretty.

SPINDIZZY WORLDS

(Ascii)

Our eternal gratitude and thanks (but no pen) go to James Ryan from Essex (yes, it's that name again) for sending in these level codes. Cheers, mate.

1 – R39Bx/+T
2 – D5/&wCTK
3 – M59LGn/x
4 – N5tVT//$
5 – F5/xLMm6
6 – B5/LVB5t
7 – J50VCY+/
8 – NytBL//g
9 – B5-rVCX5
10 – K1GpB1+5
11 – G4ftBJ4p
12 – F5QVBFbv
13 – LwLBDjz7
14 – G0fBBM37
15 – LwBBGgz9
16 – LwBBG%0X
17 – CqFBBCG0
18 – FtGBBKWD
19 – DrBBBG&p

Having trouble reaching the last few levels? Well now, thanks to James, life has been made a little easier for you.

STREET FIGHTER II

(Capcom)

Crikey, you lot *are* obsessed! It seems you'll do anything to simulate controlling the bosses (and you can only *simulate* this – controllable boss moves were not programmed in). The best result is achieved by linking a Game Genie and Action Replay together.

Plug the Game Genie into the SNES (switch up) and then plug the Action Replay into that (switch centred). Then plug *SFII* on top. Switch on and enter these Game Genie codes: 10A4-0767 + DF80-AD64 + 46C6-6493. Press START and the Action Replay screen should appear (it won't appear if you're using *SFII* with a cart on the back of the AR, ie adaptor style). Then enter these Action Replay codes: 7E0C-D10* + 7E0E-D10*, putting in place of the asterisk either A for Balrog, B for Vega, 9 for Sagat or 8 for Bison. (The first code is for player one, the second is player two.) Now press START and let player one choose Vs. mode. Both players should select Ryu, and on the handicap/stage screen flick the switch on the AR up and then back to centre. Choose the level and stage and then press START on controller one. A two-player boss vs boss fight then appears. The character graphics can be cleaned up by throwing each other (except with Balrog). This is the best version of the trick but it still crashes and glitches. Thanks to Sean Tidy from Boston, US for these codes.

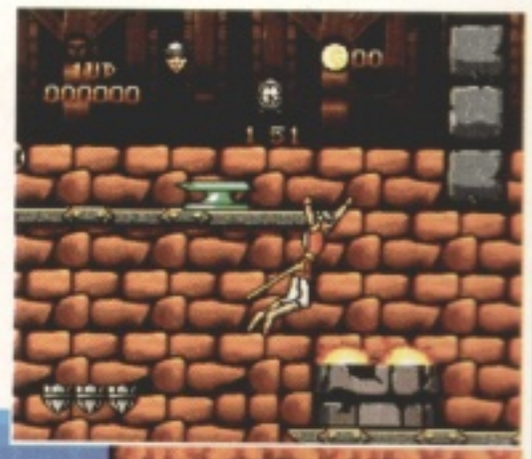
DRAGON'S LAIR

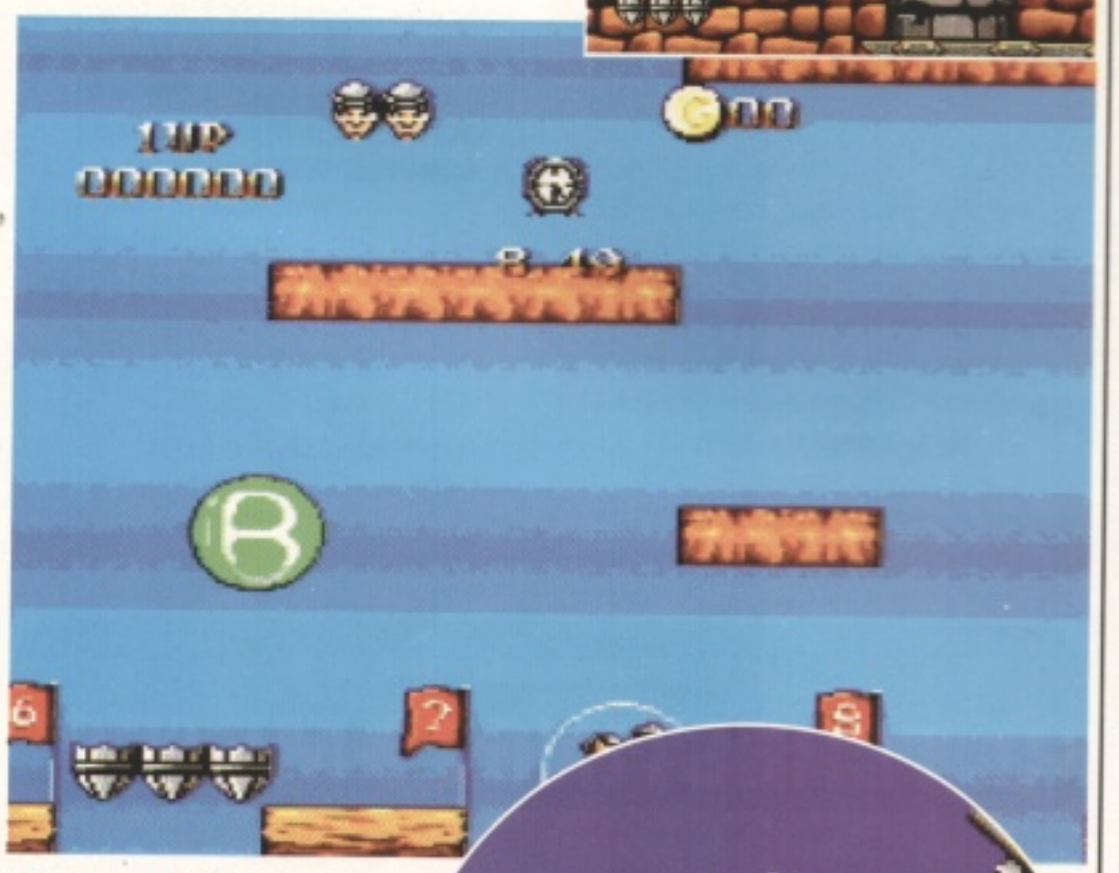
(Elite)

Entering these passwords is a game in itself – but then they *can* take you right through to the end if you want to, so it's well worth giving them a go.

2A, 4B, 6D, 7C - level 1
3B, 5C, 7D, 8A - level 2
2C, 3D, 6A, 8B - level 3
1C, 2D, 3B, 8A - level 4

Oh, by the way, they're for the easy level of *Dragon's Lair*. Thanks to Essex's James Ryan for these codes.





Well, you've got the passwords. Now all you've got to do is enter them – which might not be as easy as it sounds, as anyone who's ever tried *Dragon's Lair*'s password entry system will be able to tell you.

You'll then be able to do terrific things like this. (*? – Ed.*)

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

(Hudson Soft)

To get to the hidden options menu in *Aliens Vs Predator*, wait until the girl gets turned into stone on the introduction (!) and then press START. Now press and hold down L, then RIGHT, then X and then START. Options menu, here we come!

Left: Yes! It's the options menu.
Above: Take that, you nasty alien.

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PLAY BACK

HYPER EXCITING READER'S VOICE

This month in Play Back: yet more stuff about *Mario Kart*; it's not like the old days; a couple of token anime letters; that octopus out of *Parodius*; some anagrams; a bizarre letter about Japan; Konami vs Capcom; the price of (eek!) games; game enhancers exposed; and much, much more.

'TWO QUESTIONS'

I have two questions to ask about manga films and games:
1) Is there an English translation of the video *Detonator Orgun*?
2) Are there any *Gundam* games for the SNES?
Yours sincerely,
Mark Middleton, Glasgow.

1) We don't think so.
2) Yes, lots. The two main *Gundam* games are *Gundam F-91*, a strategy/shoot-'em-up-type thing, and *SD Gundam*, an RPG. They're both quite heavy on the Japanese text. Gundam plays a supporting role in countless other games, including *SD Great Battle* and *SD Dodgeball*, too.

'A POPULAR MISCONCEPTION'

I have some things to say. First of all, I hear many magazines refer to *Super Mario Kart* as 'another classic from Nintendo', or, more specifically, in your DSP chip article (issue 4) 'Who but Nintendo would create such a crazy, but brilliant game?' Well, not Nintendo, anyway. *Mario Kart* was actually made by an independent software group (who also created *Powerdrift*). Nintendo, realising the massive potential of the game, bought the rights to it and reprogrammed it with some very minor changes to the backgrounds and main characters. This is a popular misconception, and as I noticed you are all quite keen on *Mario Kart* I thought you'd be the ideal magazine to tell. So now you know.

Concerning the official Nintendo time you printed in the last issue for Mario Circuit 1, one of my Japanese friends informed me that the time you printed was in fact for the 150cc race setting, and is thus not so impossible after all (unless, of course, you're playing in 100cc mode). My best time on this skill level is 0'56"42.
Love,
Justin Keeling, Canterbury.

You may well be right on the first count – *Mario Kart* has a great deal in common with *Powerdrift*, and Nintendo are known not to have spent as long as usual on the project. But your second point gets a *Super Play* thumbs down. If you examine the Japanese text around the edge of the record time (which we printed in issue 5's Play Back) you'll see that it reads 'Time Trial'. And cc's don't come into it when you're playing the time trial. No, we're still waiting for someone to come up with a convincing technical explanation as to why we Brits seem to be incapable of matching the Japanese on Mario Circuit 1.

'TWICE DAILY'

I decided to write and tell you about my son Daniel. At the age of three and a half years old he completed *Super Mario Brothers* on the NES. He was four on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day received a Super Nintendo. He completed *The Addams Family* two weeks later. A few weeks later he completed all 96 levels of *Super Mario World*.

No-one ever believes how good he is until they see him in action. All his cousins and uncles and his grandad turn to him for help and advice. We don't allow him to play on it too long, though – an hour at a time, twice daily.

We were wondering if he is the youngest person to finish *Super Mario World*.
Yours sincerely,
S Matthews, Longley.

He's certainly the youngest that we at *Super Play* know of. Oh, and that's quite enough talented youngsters too.

'A MISTAKE'

I have written to correct what I think was a mistake in the March issue of *Super Play*.

You mentioned that the record time for Mario Circuit 1 was with Bowser driving, but the picture you showed from a Japanese magazine stated that the driver was Koopa.
Douglas Ayling, Claygate.

Actually you might have us there. Damn.

'A WEAKNESS FOR DAMSELS'

Taking a quick look at the Interesting-o-Meter in issue 6 I see that anime is at the top of the 'hot' pile. So, here it is:

CASTLE CAGLIOSTRO!!!

Excellent! Better than *Akira*, no problem! It's by the creator of *Porco Rosso* and is about a gentleman thief called Lupin (or Wolf in the American dubbed version) with a weakness for damsels in distress. But don't let that put you off – it's great!
Hippy, Sunderland.

Er, great. Helen McCarthy says it's one of her favourite movies too.

'I'VE DONE IT'

I've done it! I've found Chris Woods' octopus! In issue 5 Chris Woods from London wrote in saying that he couldn't place the pink octopus from *Parodius*. Well, try looking on page 49 of the same issue where you reviewed *Kikikaikai*. Am I right? Do I deserve a reward? I think so.
Tom Barry, Burnham-on-Sea.

We think not...

'THE OCTOPUS'

I read Chris Woods' letter about the octopus. You said that you thought the octopus was a new character Konami invented for *Parodius*. But if you look at the back of the instruction booklet for Konami's *Legend Of The Mystical Ninja* it has the octopus there. Are you ever going to do a guide to *Legend Of The Mystical Ninja*?
A Johnston, Welling.

Legend Of The Mystical Ninja has been available on import for ages so we might do some kind of guide if there's enough demand. There was talk of an official UK release, but it doesn't feature in Konami's current plans. A shame, that, as it's brilliant. If things change we'll let you know.

THE SUPER PLAY INTERESTING-O-METER

We can't get enough letters about some subjects, and we get far too many on others. Here's a handy guide to which ones we mean:

HOT
- Japanese RPGs
- Fanzines
- SNES *Street Fighter II Turbo*

NOT
- Mega Drive *Street Fighter II Champion Edition*
- *Street Fighter II* codes

'SOME INTERESTING ANAGRAMS'

Here are some interesting anagrams of *Super Probotector*: PROTECT OUR PROBES and PUB CORE TROOP REST. Also, *Super Castlevania IV* can be made into PERVERT FOUL CANS AS A U and U STEAL RAIN, CARVE SOUP.

Here are some others:
ACTRAISER – STAIR CARE
DESERT STRIKE – STEEDS, KITERS
DRAGON'S LAIR – DRAG OARS IN
FINAL FIGHT – IF LIGHT, FAN
PILOTWINGS – SPOIL 'N' TWIG
PRINCE OF PERSIA – PIN, SPEAR IF CORE
SUPER ALESTE – PULSE EAR SET
SUPER SOCCER – SCORES! CUP! Er... (*Snip! – Ed.*)

Yours,
Robin Firth, Paisley.

Er, fascinating stuff, Robin. If anyone else has any other good anagrams of game names, please make sure you keep them to yourself.

'I LOVE MY SUPER NES'

I have been buying *Super Play* since it first appeared in October '92 and I think that it is brilliant. I love your reviews and every other part of your mag. I will be getting your magazine every month just to see the brilliance it displays.

I love my Super Nintendo a lot, but I have a few questions about it.
1) Why are Electronic Arts so rubbish at making games for it? Most of my friends have Mega Drives and they have excellent games from Electronic Arts.
2) As I have mentioned, most of my friends have Mega Drives, and they're always slagging off the Super NES. How can I return fire?
3) I am saving up for a new game, and I'm looking for one that will last a long time. Can you recommend one? (I already have *Mario Kart*.)
4) Why don't you run a full length feature on shoot-'em-ups, as they are brilliant.

Please, please print my letter as I have yet to see a letter from anywhere in Scotland.

Yours sincerely,
Robert Stewart, Lasswade.

1) Er, they don't. This may have been true once upon a time, but just about every game they've released recently has been an absolute corker – *Desert Strike*, *Madden '93*, *NHLPA Hockey*... The real difference is that there are far more other good Super NES games about than there are good Mega Drive ones, so EA's efforts don't look quite so hot in comparison.
2) There's no need. While they're trying to kill time by thinking up insults, you could be getting on with playing great Super Nintendo games like *Mario Kart* or *Starfox*.
3) In that case you'll be wanting a game that got a good 'Gamelife' score in one of those reviews you love so much.
4) We were thinking about it, but... Hang on – you're from Scotland, aren't you?

'I REMEMBER...'

I am a 21-year-old student and have been actively involved in the appreciation of computer and video games for nearly 10 years. I remember playing such classics as *Avenger* and *Football Manager* on the ZX81, *Knight Lore* and *Marsport* on the Spectrum, and *Uridium* and *Paradroid* on the C64 among other superb games. These were games that you often (in fact, always) had to load up from cassette tape, which was horribly unreliable and could take up to 15 minutes for a big game. But though there was some crap about, a lot of these games were remarkable. In terms of gameplay and concept, many of them could not be bettered.

I now come to my main point, which is this: why is there so little innovation in the current computer/video games market? While graphics and sound have moved on light years since the humble but majestic Spectrum, innovation, originality and gameplay have gone backwards or, at best, stagnated. Where can you get the intelligent frustration that came from playing *Marsport*? *Zelda III* is one example that springs to mind, but even that only just measures up. And how many others are there? Not many, and still fewer original shoot-'em-up ideas. The only game of late I can actually see myself purchasing is *Assault Suits Valken*, which uses anime-style graphics and looks playable. But is it really more addictive than *Jetpac*?

Many of the younger gameplayers reading this may turn up their noses and call me a whinging old fogey. Fine. But until a little more imagination is applied to game design (actually, a *lot* more imagination), and until the software producers are willing to take a few more risks, games are going to be, quite frankly, rubbish for a long time to come.

Bring back Ultimate Play The Game!

And don't forget – I'm comparing a state-of-the-art 16-bit custom-built games machine to an 8-bit general-purpose computer with no specialist sound or graphics capabilities. You just have to ask yourself one question: are you really satisfied with what is available?

Yours in the name of a good game,
Robert Kitromilides, Manchester.

Yes, yes, and you still had enough change for a quarter of bullseyes an evening at the pictures and the tram ride home. True, the days when every new game was startlingly different to the last are probably over. There does seem to be a finite number of 'game-types' which can be implemented on current technology – the platform game, the driving game, the adventure game and so on. After all, the Super Nintendo basically just does the same job as a C64 or Spectrum, only much better. Until the next major technological advance – proper virtual reality, say – you can expect to play lots more platform games, driving games and puzzle games.

But within those constraints there's still a huge amount of innovation going on. Who would honestly want to go back to the Spectrum's *Chequered Flag* after playing *Mario Kart*, or *Jet Set Willy* after playing *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*? And, despite what you say, *Zelda* is streets ahead of *Marsport*, which might have seemed really exciting eight years ago but looks pretty dull now. Perhaps an analogy might help. Think of cars, for example. Although they might appear to have changed beyond all recognition over the years, they've still got four wheels and an engine just like they did a century ago. Don't expect any major changes until someone works out how to build a real, live Landspeeder.

Oh, and Ultimate Play The Game are alive and well, and (under their new name, Rare) are currently finishing off the Super Nintendo version of *Battletoads*.

'EVERY RIGHT'

I am writing to air my views on these cheat cartridges. Nintendo have every right to be annoyed with these game enhancers, for many reasons. Firstly, they kill the lastability of the game, as you could complete almost any game in a matter of time. Secondly, they're ridiculously expensive. I mean, who wants to pay £40-50 to alter a game?

Anyway, enough about that. I've just written to the Manga Club, after *Super Play* made such a fuss about it, and I'm hoping that after the quality of your comic and anime reviews you'll do some more. (Reviews, that is.)

Well done on your fab magazine.

Peter Blackwell, Haywards Heath.

Lots of people obviously *do* want to pay £40-50 to alter a game – otherwise they wouldn't do it, would they? We actually think the Action Replay and Game Genie are rather fun. They certainly come in handy when a player's guide needs doing in a hurry...

'GREETINGS FROM PORTUGAL'

Greetings from Portugal! Your magazine is spectacular, Peter Evan's insight of Japan is superb and the ratings of the games you review are very fair.

There are two reviews with which I quite disagree, though. The first one is *Cameltry*. The first time I saw someone playing it I thought what a boring game it must be, but once I played it I found it was very enjoyable with lots of levels that kept me entertained and challenged. 52% (SP1) is too low, in my opinion.

And the other game is *Super Star Wars*. I think 89% for this game is too much. The background music is great, and it's got great action, but it gets annoyingly repetitive and it doesn't take too long to finish the game. So the gamelife and gameplay factors should not be so high. After finishing the game, who is going to play it again and again?

One suggestion: why don't you hire someone who knows how to read Japanese, so it's possible to judge the 'impossible to judge' games? And please could you do a Super Player's Guide on *Bart's Nightmare*?

Yours faithfully,
José Coutinho, Lisbon, Portugal.

The world would be a pretty boring place if everyone always agreed with *Super Play*'s reviews. (Actually it gets pretty boring at times anyway, but we won't dwell on that now.) And we do appreciate your telling us when you think we've stepped out of line. Please do it more often.

In the cases of *Cameltry* and *Super Star Wars*, we're bound to stand by our original reviews. *Cameltry* had a nice idea behind it, but didn't exploit it nearly as well as it might of. We consequently got bored with it in no

KINDLY LEAVE THE STAGE

After its excesses last month, we've managed to pare Kindly Leave The Stage down to three jokes this month. They're pretty grim, though.

Q What do you call the alien that cleans Han Solo's boots?
A Shoe blacker.
Stephen Beckett, Wakefield.
2/10

Q What happened to Charles I?
A He was scented to death.
Richard Brailsford, Blackpool.
0/10 (We don't get it.)

I recently bought a pair of tortoise shell shoes – took me two weeks to walk home.
Sarah Wilkinson, Canterbury.
1/10

Don't forget – in the unlikely event of your joke scoring over 5/10 you'll win a T-shirt. The address is Kindly Leave The Stage, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

time at all. *Super Star Wars*, on the other hand, we love. True, it doesn't offer much respite from hopping around on platforms, and we marked it down for that. But it's still a brilliant version of a brilliant film, and we play it lots.

'GIVE ME MORE'

In issue 3 you said in the next issue you'd review *Dragon Quest V*, but in issue 4 you had nothing about it. Please give me more information about it, because I want to buy the US version when it's released.
Your sincerely,
Matthew Slocombe, Frodsham.

What we *actually* said was that we'd review the US version, *Dragon Warrior V*, when it appears – and that won't be till later this year. It should be good, though.

'MANGA IN SCOTLAND'

I was reading through issue 6, on the topic of manga. I had a look in my local comic shop, but I could not see any. So I was wondering – could you tell me if there is any specialist stockist of manga in Scotland (preferably in Strathclyde).
Yours hopefully,
David Borthwick, Rigside.

We have to admit that we're not sure. But if there is one, and they're reading this...

'A GENERAL POINT'

I'd like to make a general point to your readers:

Capcom games are, on the whole, 'prettier' than Konami games. Konami gets much more speed out of the Super Nintendo (*Gradius* aside, of course). Capcom are mostly pretty crap in this respect. Both companies are good at animation. On balance, I'd say Konami comes out tops for real games players like myself.
Dave Smith, Welwyn Garden City.

Thanks for straightening that out for us, Dave.

'THE FRIENDLIEST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD'

I'd like to tell you my opinion on Japan, the weird yet wonderful country on the far east of Asia. To most Western eyes, Japan seems to be the untouchable country with comparatively strange customs. We seem to believe that the whole country is congested with people from coast to coast. There are a few of us, however, who recognise that there are many square miles of beautiful, unspoilt countryside, where thousands of people still manufacture one of Japan's biggest industries, rice, in the traditional ways, with a lack of machinery or other technology of any kind.

Japan's cities, on the other hand, are completely the opposite, their massive skyscrapers filled wall to wall with anything from Barcode Battlers to thumb-high robots. The capital, Tokyo, with a population of over 11 million, is a shopper's dream, especially for the computer buyer.

Then there's anime. No other country seems to go for one thing in such a way. To the Japanese it's not a hobby, it's an obsession. It doesn't just stop at feature-length animation films, either. The Japanese are like it about anything – comics, computer games and even music.

I think we should admire any country that can mix advanced technology with an ancient culture, with a population of some of the friendliest people in the world. We shouldn't let the language barrier stop communication.
Mark Tanner, Stroud.

Erm... it's marvellous, isn't it?

'LOONY TUNES'

I'd like to go nya-nya-nya-ny-nya-nyaahhh to Ray Jones of Exmouth's letter in *Super Play* 7 – He's got it all wrrrrooooooonnnnggggg! NONE of the *Tiny Toons* are related to the *Loony Tunes* characters. The Tinies are just ordinary, plain Toons who want to be like their teachers, the *Loony Toons*. Get the message? I should know, cuz I read this in an American magazine, interviewing Steven Spielberg.
Yours if you insist,
Laura 'Mian' Watton, Halesowen.

Oh.

'THE PRICE OF GAMES'

I know you don't want people going on about the price of games, so I'll be quick.

If we have to pay more for games with more memory – 16 Mbit instead of 8, then why don't we pay less for games that are only 4 Mbit?

From where I live things look a real mess for Nintendo and the SNES. Hardly any of the computer shops in Birmingham sell official UK games. If it wasn't for *Super Play* and its informative approach, buying games in all the different versions would be confusing. I can't believe that Nintendo isn't losing a fortune to the grey importers.

The answer is not better security chips (which add to the cost of the cart) but worldwide release dates, worldwide distribution and worldwide prices.
Paul Johnson, London.

Good point on the Mbits front. But few people believe that *Street Fighter II*'s price was fixed at £65 simply because the game's bigger than usual. It's much more tempting to think that Bandai simply charged as much as they thought they could get away with. There *are* changes afoot, though, and if *Starfox* (or, erm, '*Starwing*') really does go on sale for £39.95 then it might just be possible to forgive and forget. We agree, worldwide release dates would be great – and we suspect Nintendo think so too. The problem seems to be a logistical one, in particular manufacturing enough copies of any one game for there to be enough carts to go round.

'DID YOU KNOW...'

If you run a UK copy of *Super Tennis* on an imported US SNES (using a converter with an US game in the back), then it's much faster – even faster than the American speed! This makes the game even more exciting and difficult, and John's strokes are amazing. I wonder if anyone else has noticed this with other British games?
Yours faithfully,
Andrew Tilley, Oxford.

Cor!

'HIGHLIGHTS'

After reading your feature on new protection schemes for carts, is it worth buying a Super Nintendo and adaptor to play import games?
Wayne Hapworth, Larkfield.
Definitely. In fact, it's probably worth buying one before reading our feature as well.

I think that your magazine is so cool that I would be willing to pay £10 for each issue.
Daniel Nix, Stoke-on-Trent.
We're pleased to hear it, and we're sure your newsagent will be too.

Just to get you in the mood for a smart June mag I declare *Super Play*... Mag Of The Millenium.
Adam Davis, Thame.
Hurrah!

Sorry about the page. My friend ripped it, and he's got the other half.
Simon Haslett, Belfast.
It *was* a bit of a mess, but never mind.

I am just writing to ask you if you would consider reviewing fanzines.
Simon Coyle, Lisburn.
Certainly. If you write a fanzine, send it in, and if we like it we'll give it a plug.

WRITE AWAY!
Please do write to us, won't you? And if, for whatever reason, we decide to print your letter, we'll send you a smart, black *Super Play* pen. The address is:
PLAY BACK, SUPER PLAY, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW.

It's back! And better than ever!

ENVELOPE ART!

The idea is simple – if you write to us, why not decorate the envelope you send the letter in with something Super Nintendo-related? It'll brighten up the life of the postman, and who knows – we might print your effort in our next issue. The best one every month gets a *Super Play* T-shirt, and the rest we use receive pens, so what are you waiting for? Our address is, of course, *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

Manuke the raccoon, from *Kikikaikai*, by Christopher Harris of Portsmouth. On the back he notes: 'The picture looks squashed because it's only a 50 Hz envelope. SCART ones are too expensive.' Nice one!

A neat little character – looking like one of Wil's illustrations of us that has gone astray – comes from Wayne Hepworth of Larkfield, Kent.

This glorious *Pop'n Twin Bee* illustration was painted by Anthony Bowry of Hayes in Middlesex.

A fabby *F-Zero* pic by Toby Reynolds, from near Frome in Somerset.

Ken seems to have put his red tunic in the wash with his blue one, and they've both come out purple (or something). This stylised action shot is from Ian Hodyson of Marple in Stockport. (*Actually, this is how he looks in the* Turbo *version – Ed.*)

'This one is simple but to the point,' says Mark Baldwin of Thurmaston in Leicestershire. That's all very well for you to say, Mark – but what is it exactly? Still, we like it, which is what counts.

***Ranma 1/2*, with both incarnations of our hero(ine), comes from Dominic Turner of Blackpool.**

We especially liked Ian Simpson of Wigan's praise-filled effort.

Not eligible for the T-shirt prize (because it's actually a full sized painting, and not envelope art at all) is this nifty *Starfox* image from Brian Francis of Bishop's Storford, Herts.

Another Ken from *Street Fighter II*, this one in front of a volcano, a giant *Super Play* logo and a dodgy looking Japanese bloke. It's by Dagenham's Dean Sansom, and nearly didn't get in because of the thing he wrote about Matt on the back of the envelope!

T-SHIRT WINNER!

After much deliberation, we chose Matt Squibb's brilliant painted offering as this month's best. Favourite bits are the way he's drawn Fox McCloud, the *Super Play* SP logos everyone's proudly wearing, and the presence of Slime, the blob-like star of the *Dragon Quest* series.

TOTAL! – Bjorn to be wild!

Issue 17 on sale from the 15th of April

TOTAL!
MARIO MANIA!
GAME BOY!
Free!
And for the other Lost Vikings, too!
We go berserk over Super NES Lost Vikings! Win a Sony TV plus SNES – page 22!

Plus a FREE Mario badge! (Four different designs available.)

REPLY OR DIIIIEEEEE!

MEET VINCE CARBINE (UNEMPLOYED)

- He's Lance Carbine's younger brother
- He picks his teeth with a machete
- He keeps having 'Nam flashbacks (although he's never actually been there)
- He likes his steaks rare. And his chicken drumsticks, for that matter. And his fish fingers
- He rolls his own 'cigarettes'
- He never blinks
- Lance is a bit embarrassed about him, to be honest

If you cast your mind back to issue 1 of *Super Play*, you may remember that we asked you to fill in a reader survey form and send it back to us. And we enlisted the help of crack private investigator Lance Carbine to exert a little gentle pressure where necessary. The response to the survey was, on the whole, fairly satisfactory, but Lance is still working his way through the list of those who didn't reply. If he hasn't reached your name yet, you can expect a visit soon.

In the meantime, you might want to have a look at our brand new reader survey. *Another* survey? Yup. *Super Play*'s changed a lot since we last spoke to you, and we're sure you have as well, so we'd like to update our records. We're confident you'll be more than happy to help us out, but we'd like to make sure. And unfortunately, as we said, Lance Carbine is still tied up with the last survey. So what he's done is refer us to his brother Vince.

Now, there are two ways we can go about this:

THE EASY WAY

By far the simplest course of action would be for you to fill in this form and return it to us. That way you might also find yourself winning one of 10 *Super Play* T-shirts.

If you won't co-operate, however, there's always...

THE HARD WAY

The first you'll know of Vince Carbine's visit is when your living room window shatters and a hand-grenade rolls to a halt in front of the television. If you actually manage to dive behind the settee, and survive the resulting explosion, your first thought – once your ears have stopped ringing – will be to feel through the smoke for the telephone. But before you reach it you'll hear the deafening sound of an AK-47 assault rifle being fired just inches from your head. A hand will grab you roughly by the throat and pin you against the wall. And Vince Carbine will press his twisted face up against yours. 'Your name, punk!' You'll try to protest, but his hand will tighten on your throat until your bulging eyes tell him you're ready to talk. You'll reel off your name, your age, your favourite section of *Super Play* and anything else he asks – anything, if he'll only let you live. By the time he gets to your annual income you'll be on your knees, sobbing uncontrollably, with the '47 pressed against your neck. 'Lie down!' he'll command. 'Put your hands behind your head!' It'll be two hours before you dare look up to find the smoke's cleared, the room's completely deserted, and the tattered remains of the curtains are flapping in the empty window frame.

The choice is yours.

YOUR HARDWARE

1) WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MACHINES DO YOU EITHER OWN, OR INTEND TO BUY IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS? AND WHICH OF THOSE DO YOU PLAY 'ON A REGULAR BASIS'?

	OWN	INTEND TO BUY	PLAY OFTEN
Super NES	☐	☐	☐
NES	☐	☐	☐
Game Boy	☐	☐	☐
Sega Mega Drive	☐	☐	☐
Sega Master System	☐	☐	☐
Sega Game Gear	☐	☐	☐
Nęo Geo	☐	☐	☐
PC Engine	☐	☐	☐
Atari Lynx	☐	☐	☐
Commodore Amiga	☐	☐	☐
Atari ST	☐	☐	☐
PC compatible	☐	☐	☐
C64	☐	☐	☐
Spectrum	☐	☐	☐
Amstrad CPC	☐	☐	☐

2) HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED YOUR SUPER NINTENDO (ASSUMING YOU *DO* ACTUALLY OWN ONE)?

- Over two years ☐
- Over a year ☐
- Over six months ☐
- Over two months ☐
- Just bought it ☐

3) WHAT SORT OF SUPER NES DO YOU OWN?

- Official UK ☐
- US import ☐
- Japanese import ☐

4) WHAT EXTRA BITS AND PIECES DO YOU OWN OR INTEND TO BUY (IN THE NEXT SIX

MONTHS OR SO) FOR YOUR SUPER NINTENDO?

	OWN	INTEND TO BUY
New joypads	☐	☐
Joystick	☐	☐
Pro Action Replay	☐	☐
Game Genie	☐	☐
Adaptor/convertor	☐	☐
Super Scope	☐	☐
CD ROM drive	☐	☐
Hornby Superdeck	☐	☐
Super Multitap	☐	☐

YOUR GAMES

5) PLEASE LIST YOUR FIVE FAVOURITE SUPER NINTENDO GAMES:

1).....
2).....
3).....
4).....
5).....

6) HOW MANY GAMES DO YOU OWN ALTOGETHER?

.....

7) AND HOW MANY GAMES DO YOU RECKON YOU'LL BUY OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS?

None ☐
One ☐
Under five ☐
5-10 ☐
Over 10 ☐

8) HOW MUCH WOULD YOU HAVE SAID YOU SPENT ON GAMES EACH MONTH?

Under £10 ☐
£10-£20 ☐
£20-£30 ☐
£30-£40 ☐
£40-£50 ☐
£50-£60 ☐
Over £60 ☐

9) WHAT FRACTION OF YOUR GAMES ARE IMPORTED AMERICAN OR JAPANESE ONES?

None ☐
About a quarter ☐
About a half ☐
About three quarters ☐
All ☐

10) RATE THESE DIFFERENT SORT OF GAME ACCORDING TO HOW MUCH YOU LIKE THEM – 10 FOR YOUR VERY FAVOURITES, AND 0 FOR THE ONES YOU CAN'T STAND:

Shoot-'em-ups ☐
Platform games ☐
Sports simulations ☐
Beat-'em-ups ☐
Puzzle games ☐
Driving games ☐
Arcade adventures ☐
Role-playing games ☐
Simulations ☐
Strategy games ☐
Others (please say which ones):
.....
.....

11) ON AVERAGE, HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU THINK YOU SPEND PLAYING GAMES EACH WEEK?

A couple of hours ☐
About five hours ☐
5-10 hours ☐
10-15 hours ☐
15-25 hours ☐
Over 25 hours ☐

12) WHICH ONE FROM THE LIST BELOW HAS THE GREATEST INFLUENCE ON THE CHOICE OF GAMES YOU BUY?

Super Play reviews ☐
UK mag reviews generally ☐
American or Japanese mags ☐
Advertising ☐
Packaging ☐
Word of mouth ☐
Impulse purchase ☐

13) WHAT PROPORTION OF YOUR GAMES ARE BOUGHT THROUGH MAIL ORDER?

None ☐
About a quarter ☐
About a half ☐
About three quarters ☐
All ☐

14) HOW DO YOU SELECT THE MAIL ORDER COMPANIES YOU ORDER FROM?

Best prices ☐
Widest choice ☐
Nicest-looking advert ☐
Used them before ☐
Heard good things about them ☐
Saw them in *Super Play* ☐

YOUR READING HABITS

15) HOW MANY PEOPLE READ YOUR COPY OF SUPER PLAY (INCLUDING YOURSELF)?

.....

16) WHICH OTHER NINTENDO MAGAZINES DO YOU BUY? PLEASE RATE EACH ONE OUT OF 10.

Super Play...../10
...../10
...../10
...../10
...../10

17) IF YOU'VE RATED ANOTHER MAGAZINE ABOVE SUPER PLAY, WHY HAVE YOU MARKED IT HIGHER? EH?

.....
.....
.....

18) PLEASE RATE EACH SECTION OF SUPER PLAY OUT OF 10.

Super Express (generally)...../10
Anime World...../10
Live From Hell City...../10
The *Super Play* Interview...../10
How Do You Make A Game, Anyway?...../10
Game reviews...../10
Starfox Super Player's Guide...../10
Batman Returns Super Player's Guide...../10
Mode 7...../10
Play Back...../10
Envelope Art...../10
What Cart?...../10

19) IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT SUPER PLAY, WHAT WOULD IT BE? (APART FROM ASK ADE.)

.....
.....
.....

20) WHO'S YOUR FAVOURITE SUPER PLAY REVIEWER?

Jonathan ☐
(*Oi! – Ed.*)

OH, ALL RIGHT THEN.

Matt ☐
Jason ☐
Rich ☐

YOU

21) WHERE D'YOU LIVE?

Wales ☐
SW England ☐
SE England ☐
Midlands ☐
Northern England ☐
Northern Ireland ☐
Scotland ☐
Rest Of World (please specify):
.....

22) HOW OLD ARE YOU?

.....

23) ARE YOU

Male? ☐
Or female? ☐

24) ARE YOU

In full-time employment? ☐
Unemployed? ☐
At college or university? ☐
At school? ☐

25) WHAT'S YOUR APPROXIMATE ANNUAL INCOME?

Over £20,000 ☐
£16,000-£19,999 ☐
£12,000-£15,999 ☐
£8,000-£11,999 ☐
£5,000-£7,999 ☐
£1,000-£4,999 ☐
Under £1000 ☐
Pocket money ☐

26) OH YEAH, AND STEVE, OUR PUBLISHER, WANTS TO KNOW HOW OFTEN YOU READ DIGITISER ON TELETEXT.

Every day ☐
A few times a week ☐
Once a week ☐
Rarely ☐
Never, ever ☐

Right, all you've got to do now is fill in your name and address and post the whole thing off. We'll then try to explain to Vince that we don't, after all, want him to pay you a visit. (Though he can be tricky to get through to.)

Name.....
Address.....
.....
.....
Postcode.....

Send your completed questionnaire to:
SUPER PLAY SURVEY, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH BA1 2BW.

And please make sure it reaches us by 18 June 1993, or you won't have a hope of winning a T-shirt.

If you don't want your name and address to be stored in any computer records arising from this questionnaire, please tick this box: ☐

And remember, if Vince doesn't get you, I will. (Just ask the dirtwads who 'didn't get round to' filling out the survey last time!) So do yourself a favour, and post this page back to the boys and girls at Super Play!

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WHAT CART?

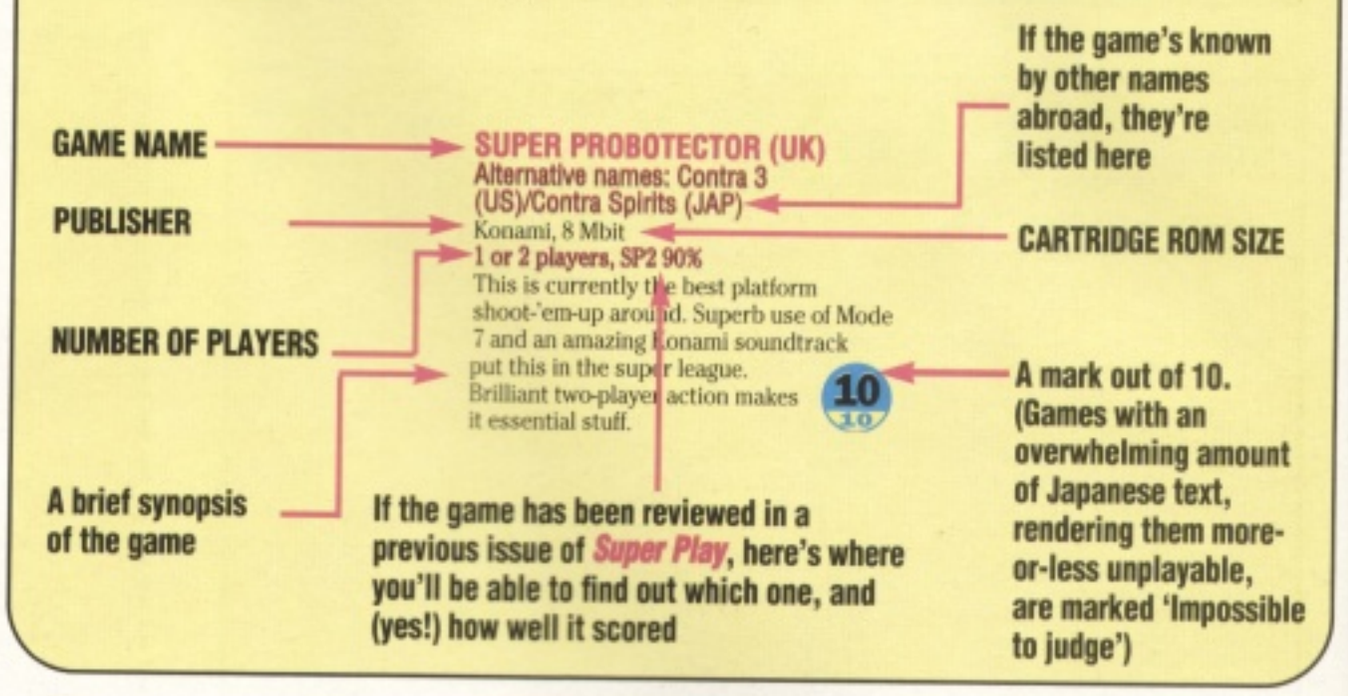
SUPER PLAY'S GAME LIBRARY

Yep, it's that time of the issue again – time to completely lose yourself in your own personal reference library to every game (well, almost) that's ever been released on the Super Nintendo. There are a whopping 236 of them this month – we know that 'cos Sue, our Production Editor, counted 'em all! (Twice.) Of course, what that doesn't include are the games that we're giving full-sized reviews to this issue – they'll be entered into What Cart? next month instead. (And we *know* we haven't reviewed every Japanese text-filled RPG game there is – most of them are completely unplayable to Westerners – but that doesn't stop this being simply the most comprehensive listing of Super Nintendo games you'll find anywhere.)

However, if you do know of a game that we've inadvertently missed out, why don't you put pen to paper and send us a brief What Cart?-style review of it – we may be able to include it in these pages next month. And you might get a fab *Super Play* T-shirt for your trouble too. The address to write to is, of course: *Super Play*, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.

KEY TO YOUR CHART

You wouldn't believe how easy *What Cart?* is to understand. Perhaps this diagram might go some way towards convincing you, though:


GAME NAME
SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
If the game's known by other names abroad, they're listed here
PUBLISHER
Konami, 8 Mbit
CARTRIDGE ROM SIZE
NUMBER OF PLAYERS
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
This is currently the best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and an amazing Konami soundtrack put this in the super league. Brilliant two-player action makes it essential stuff.
10
A mark out of 10. (Games with an overwhelming amount of Japanese text, rendering them more-or-less unplayable, are marked 'Impossible to judge')
A brief synopsis of the game
If the game has been reviewed in a previous issue of Super Play, here's where you'll be able to find out which one, and (yes!) how well it scored

ACROBAT MISSION (JAP)
Teichiku, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 38%
A despicably feeble vertical scrolling shoot-'em-up
3/10

ACTRAISER (JAP/US/UK)
Enix/Quintet, 6/8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 90%
A brilliant combination of strategy and platform action. Graphically great, and the music's fab. Buy the UK or US version.
9/10

THE ADDAMS FAMILY (JAP/US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%
A polished and enjoyable romp. with adventure, puzzle and shoot-'em-up bits. A real challenge that's frustrating in places, but passwords allow quick completion.
8/10

THE ADDAMS FAMILY IN: PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT (UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 90%

The second *Addams Family* platform game, and it's even better than the first one. It's well designed, huge, challenging, gorgeous-looking and great fun to play. Highly recommended.
9/10

AEROBIZ (US)
Alternative name: Air Manager (JAP)
Koei, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP7 69%
An airport management sim (sounds unpromising already) that has its moments, but is basically too serious for its own good. Well presented, but there ain't really enough here to hold your interest for long.
6/10

ALIENS VS PREDATOR (JAP)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 28%
An unoriginal beat-'em-up, with a neat central concept, but generally dire gameplay and no explanation of the plot. Avoid.
2/10

ANOTHER WORLD (UK)
Alternative names: Outer World (JAP), Out Of This World (US)
Interplay, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 81%
The graphics in this one are superb – playing it is just like watching a film. The action is varied, and there are lots of great cinema-style close-up shots, but there isn't enough there to make it a classic.
8/10

ARCANA (US)
Alternative name: Card Master (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
An RPG based around a 3D perspective (like *Dungeon Master*) sounds good, but is very plodding – the combat scenes are long and drawn out. Graphically it's not bad, and the music is well done, but only really for die-hard RPG fans.
6/10

ASSAULT SUITS VALKEN (JAP)
Alternative name: Cybernator (US)
NCS Masiya. 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 91%
The (imaginary) principle of assault suits is a fab basis for a game, but, oddly, this is the first to properly use it. This is a brilliant (very Japanese) shoot-'em-up, dripping with high technology and boasting some great explosions.
9/10

ASTRAL BOUT (JAP)
A-Wave, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A wrestling/fighting game, and not a good one. Graphically not a complete disaster, but the sprite collision and playability are ropy. When you think you could buy *Street Fighter II*, what's the point?
4/10

AUGUSTA MASTERS 3D GOLF (JAP)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
The first 3D golf game on the Super Famicom, and still rather good despite Japanese text. Graphically it's a mixture of bit-maps and polygons, and it works quite well. The screen update could be faster, though.
8/10

AXELAY (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Okay, so *Axelay*'s a little thin gameplay-wise. But – ooh! – those graphics! They're possibly the most impressive ones ever! There are also some brill baddies, and it alternates between neat horizontal and vertical scrolling.
8/10

BART'S NIGHTMARE (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
The formula may not sound promising – lots of little sub-games rather than one big one – but this is absolutely superb, and very weird. Wonderful graphics and lots of humour, and it's challenging.
9/10

BATMAN RETURNS (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 87%

A straightforward, but beautifully-put-together, scrolling beat-'em-up. Konami has captured the mood of the film perfectly.
8/10

BATTLEBLAZE (JAP/US)
Sammy Corp, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A really awkward game that's nowhere near as good as its contemporaries (*Street Fighter II* and *Ranma 1/2*). The graphics are okay, the sound's okay, but the gameplay's dire. There's quite a reasonable range of moves, but you could do so much better.
5/10

BATTLE CLASH (US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 48%
This is the first stand-alone game released for the Super Scope. A shame that it's so short lived and awful. Cheaper than your average import, though.
4/10

BATTLE GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Remember *Super Sprint*, the coin-op? Well, imagine a version of it (ie an overhead view driving game) where you can only see a tiny area of the track around your car, and have to rely on signals to warn you of corners. We came to the conclusion that it's 'challenging'. Lots of babes in it though.
6/10

BEST OF THE BEST (US)
Alternative name: Super Kick Boxing (JAP)
Electro Brain, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 50%
Let's be honest: this is a kick boxing game, not a karate one. Treated as such it gets the job done pretty well. But, as with any game that comes within a mile of the word 'boxing', it gets boring fast.
5/10

BIG RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
After a promising start, the abysmal graphics and virtually non-existent gameplay make for what is surely the worst driving game on the system. (Nothing like the original coin-op.)
2/10

BILL LAIMBEER'S COMBAT BASKETBALL (US)
Hudson Soft, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Originally an Amiga game called *Future Basketball*, this plodding *Speedball* clone is a surprisingly poor release from Hudson Soft.
3/10

BLAZEON (JAP/US)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
A very tacky horizontal scroller with anime-style robots in. It's kinda different, but everything's so crude and jerky. That makes this game crap – there are so many better shoot-'em-ups out there to choose from.
3/10

THE BLUES BROTHERS (JAP/US/UK)
Titus, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 68%

This platformer has little to do with the film (except that it's got Jake and Elwood in) or – indeed – the Amiga original. It's not bad (quite appealing, in fact), but doesn't match up to *Mario* et al.
6/10

BOMBUZAL (JAP)
Alternative name: Ka-Blooey (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player
Clear bombs from mazes of tiles by setting off chain reactions, without getting blown up. The levels are well designed and it takes skill to negotiate them. But unfortunately the graphics are dreary, and the game's boring.
4/10

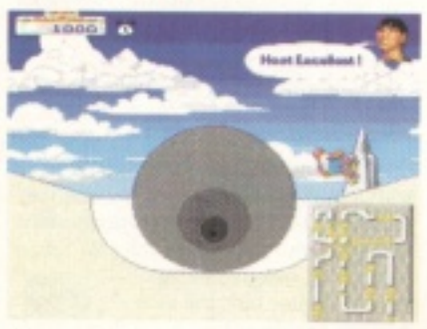
BRASS BOSS (JAP)
Lazersoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 56%
Another *SFII* wannabe that doesn't make the grade. The graphics are okay, and it plays okay, but *SFII* is so much better.
5/10

BULLS VS BLAZERS (JAP/US)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%
A good, solid basketball game placing the emphasis on accuracy and detail at the expense of slick graphics. Very challenging.
8/10

CACOMA KNIGHT (JAP)
Datam, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 36%
A tedious variant of *Painter*, the ancient

coin-op. It does its best to brighten up proceedings with some special backdrops, but even they're not very good. **3**

CALIFORNIA GAMES II (JAP/US)
DTMC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 22%



A crap multi-event sports 'sim', with ridiculous games, poor graphics, and very little to actually do. Does nothing to improve the reputation of US programmers. **2**

CAL RIPKIN JR BASEBALL (US)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 70%
A perfectly serviceable baseball game, with no obvious flaws, but *Pro League '93* is better. **7**

CAMELTRY (JAP)
Alternative name: On The Ball (US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 52%
The idea of a rotating Mode 7 maze with a ball bouncing around it is a good one, but Taito haven't got the most from it. The levels are too easy to complete, and once you've seen them all you won't return. **5**

CAPTAIN TSUBASU 3 (JAP)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Yikes! A football management game, based on a Jap comic hero! Some dynamic match highlights, but unless you can read Japanese, and have tons of patience, stay away. Impossible to judge. **?**

CAVEMAN NINJA 2 (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 58%
The sequel to *Joe & Mac* (sort of), reasonably playable, and offers a fair amount of long-term challenge. There are hundreds of better games around. **5**

CB WARS (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A strange anime scroll-along-and-whack-nasties-with-whatever-you-can-find type of game. RPG elements and lots of Japanese text render this a poor choice for most people. Impossible to judge. **?**

CHESSMASTER (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 55%
It *does* play chess. (It can beat us.) The rest of it's rubbish though, with terrible, terrible sound and a very sad options menu being particular 'high' points. Stick to the real thing. **5**

CHESTER CHEETAH (JAP/US)
Kaneko, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 58%
Bright, colourful platform game, based on Cheetos' (American cheese snack) advertising critter – good for younger players, but it lacks challenge for everyone else. **5**

CHUCK ROCK (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 61%
A well put together Stone Age platform game, with lots of imagination and fun touches, but ultimately it's all a bit bland and dull. **6**

CLUE (US)
Parker Brothers, 4 Mbit
1 to 6 players, SP7 46%
A board game conversion that does its job (playing Cluedo) okay, but offers nothing extra. Expensive for what it is. **4**

COMBATRIBES (JAP/US)
Technos, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An extremely dull beat-'em-up that makes absolutely no attempt to save itself with any pick-upable weapons or interesting levels. **5**

COSMO GANG (JAP)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 70%
A *Galaga*-style shoot-'em-up that doesn't match up to the ancient coin-op in the gameplay stakes. A fun two-player mode, and some lovely graphics and sound, but spoilt by infinite continues. **7**

COSMO GANG: THE PUZZLE (JAP)
Namcot, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 58%

The *Galaga*-lookalikes return in a colourful, *Tetris*-inspired puzzle game. There's some decent strategy involved here, but it won't hold your interest for long. **5**

DARIUS TWIN (JAP/US)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Lacking in levels for a *Darius* game – but this isn't all bad news. Good graphics, okay sound and not too much slow-down make it a reasonable buy, though it's not challenging in the first few levels. **7**

DAVID CRANE'S AMAZING TENNIS (JAP/US)
Absolute Entertainment, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 80%
This *looks* like the best tennis game yet. The 3D perspective works well – until you take control of a player at the other end. A restricted viewpoint makes it hard to serve and return – a split screen would have been better. *Super Tennis* still rules. **8**

DESERT STRIKE (JAP/US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 90%
An addictive chopper-based shoot-'em-up with helicopteriness pouring out of it. Just like flying round a desert blowing things up with missiles (only not so hot and sandy). **9**

D FORCE (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit
1 player
A crap shoot-'em-up with maybe the worst graphics, sound and playability on the SNES. Mode 7 makes the useless visuals look blocky. Dreadful sound, too. Avoid! **2**

DINOSAURS (JAP)
Alternative name: Dino City (US)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 83%
One of our favourite platform games, this has fab graphics, cute characters and plenty of amusing bits. But it's too easy to finish. We love it anyway, though. **8**

DIRTY CHALLENGER (JAP)
Yutaka, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Yet another dire wrestling game. This time it includes some very dubious 'grapples' – you could be mistaken for thinking it was all a bit, well, dirty. **3**

DRAGONBALL Z (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
The original Jap *Dragonball* anime series appeared on the 8-bit Famicom (*NES*), but this new version is the first available for the Super Famicom. An RPG with combat scenes and loads of Japanese text. Very 8-bit in look too. Impossible to judge. **?**

DRAGON'S LAIR (US/UK)
Elite, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 82%
This looks gorgeous, plays well and is far better than the straight conversion of the coin-op that other machines have suffered. But the frustrating difficulty level hides a game not as long as it could be. **8**

DRAGON QUEST V (JAP)
Enix, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
The biggest selling game in Japan to date is a sprawling RPG with plenty of Jap text to be translated for a US release this year in the *Dragon Warrior* series. It's primitive, and very Japanese. Impossible to judge. **?**

DRAKKHEN (JAP/US/UK)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP4 64%
Based on a French 16-bit computer RPG/adventure, this has reasonable graphics but an awful combat system. Most people will find this a real bore but if you *are* tempted, get the US or UK version. **6**

EARTHLIGHT (JAP)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Based on a popular PC Engine game called *Nectaris*, this is an interplanetary space strategy affair, but there's enough Japanese in here to make it tricky to work out. Avoid. Impossible to judge. **?**

EVIL SWORD (JAP)
Datam Polystar, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 55%

A colourful, bizarre, very Japanese and not very good slice-'em-up, featuring a girl running around swiping things with her sword. **5**

EXTRA INNINGS (US)
Alternative name: Ganba League Baseball (JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 64%
Baseball's tricky to translate well to a games machine, but this probably makes the best job of it, with cute characters and slick action. The sequel, *Pro Baseball League '93*, is even better. **6**

F-1 EXHAUST HEAT (JAP/UK)
Alternative names: F1 ROC (US)
Ocean/Seta, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 69%
Your car's a bit small, and you don't get much warning of corners. But at least you get a 3D view of the track. Not our fave game, but some people love it. **6**

FACEBALL 2000 (US)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 54%
On the Game Boy this 3D maze shoot-'em-up is good fun, but the SNES conversion suffers badly. Slow, jerky 3D, and confusing with two players. Not great. **5**

FATAL FURY (JAP/US)
Takara, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
One of a growing number of *Street Fighter II* look-a-likes, and probably the next best thing to The Big One. Looks okay, plays fine (though the controls are very awkward) and worth considering. **7**

FINAL FANTASY II (US)
Alternative name: Final Fantasy IV (JAP)
Square Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
An odd one this, as in Japan it's the fourth in a popular series. This is the first version for the SNES, and while it's graphically basic, the lovely music and the involved quest lift it way above lesser RPGs. **8**

FINAL FANTASY V (JAP)
Square Soft, 16 Mbit + BB
1 player
A huge-selling RPG to be translated and retitled *Final Fantasy III* in the US. Buy that one, unless you're fluent in Japanese. Impossible to judge. **?**

FINAL FANTASY: MYSTIC QUEST (US)
Square Soft, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP3 79%
A spin-off younger player's version of the popular *Final Fantasy* RPG series that's a fun and involving quest for role-playing beginners. Cheaper than most releases. **7**

FINAL FIGHT (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 86%
The best walking-along-beating-people-up game on the SNES. Brilliant graphics, varied opposition and great moves. But it lacks a two-player mode, and so gets dull. **8**

FINAL FIGHT GUY (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pointless new version of *Final Fight* where the best character, Cody, is replaced by Guy. A poor game-music CD is included. It's easier than the original. **8**

FIRE DODGEBALL (JAP)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A cute, anime version of a very weird game (see *SD Dodgeball* for details). The graphics are good, but the game itself is a bit too simple to be particularly rewarding. **6**

FLYING HERO: BUGLE'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Sofel, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 68%
An average – if fairly likeable – Jap

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE

SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 INTRO SEQUENCES

Intro sequences? We just can't get enough of them here at *Super Play*. We just love the way they introduce the games in a way that nothing else can. Here are some of our favourites...

1 ANOTHER WORLD (81%)
Ferraris, lifts, numeric keypads and spooky lightning effects. They're all here. What more could you ask?

2 SUPER STAR WARS (89%)
Imperial Battle Cruisers, laser bolts and some absolutely brilliant music form this stunning intro.

3 STARFOX (93%)
Here we're talking about the bit where the ships are actually launched from their base, not the other bits, though they're good too.

4 PRINCE OF PERSIA (89%)
A salutary lesson against chatting up strange princesses in palace gardens. We love the way he gets beaten about the head with a stick.

5 GRADIUS III
Just another spaceship being launched affair? Er, yes. But hooked up to a stereo this music really kicks, er, that is, provides suitable atmosphere.

shoot-'em-up. It has its moments, but really needs that extra special something to stand a chance of beating *Parodius* etc.

6/10

F-ZERO (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 86%
A fab Mode 7 racing game. Dead fast and smooth. Watch out for the vicious computer-controlled hover cars. Bland scenery and a weird futuristic setting, but it's an impressive display of the SNES' abilities.

8/10

GEORGE FOREMAN'S KO BOXING (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 18%
Boxing games are invariably awful – but this awful?

1/10

GODS (US/UK)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 74%
Famous Amiga platform shoot-'em-up comes to the SNES, graphics and puzzles all intact, and with extra measures of playability. This'll last you ages.

7/10

GOLDEN FIGHTER (JAP)
Culture Brain, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 42%
A very ropy *Street Fighter II* 'tribute'. The graphics are rubbish, the gameplay's rubbish, the sound's rubbish... Avoid.

4/10

GPX CYBER FORMULA (JAP)
Alternative name: Cyberspin (US)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Another top-view scroller, and another case of yikes-was-that-a-corner? But anime based this time, with some incredibly smooth scrolling. Otherwise this is a very average game.

7/10

GRADIUS III (JAP/US)
Konami, 4 Mbit
1 player
Similar to the coin-op and – amazingly – all packed onto a 4 meg cart, this is one to check out. It's an early title, so slow-down is a problem – it rather scuppers the otherwise beautiful graphics and powerful sound. Still, it's more impressive and playable than *Super R-Type*.

7/10

GUNDAM F-91 (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A massive selling (in Japan at least) arcade/ strategy game-thing, with Japanese text. Still, it's playable if you persevere, but this is one for real robot fans only. Impossible to judge.

?/10

GUNFORCE (JAP/US)
Irem, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 59%
Similar to *Super Probotector* in many respects, but not half as good in any of them. The 'respects', that is. (Sorry, that was a bit confusing, wasn't it?)

6/10

HARLEY'S HUMUNGOUS ADVENTURE (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 69%

Graphically it could be a lot better, but it's a reasonably imaginative platform game with some potential all the same.

6/10

HAT TRICK HERO (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Soccer Champ (US)
Taito, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A slick conversion of the coin-op *Football Champ*. It's fast, but too easy in one-player mode – you'll need to play a chum to have any fun. Not as good as *Super Soccer*.

7/10

HOLE-IN-ONE GOLF (JAP/US)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players
An old game, but still one of the best golf sims around – what it lacks in technical ingenuity, it makes up for in user friendliness. The overhead view used isn't much like playing the real game, but nice Mode 7 course introductions help – as does turning the music off!

7/10

HOME ALONE (JAP/US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP 36%
A dire attempt to cash in on the success of the movie. Hopeless graphics and sound don't rescue the banal gameplay from the claws of drudgery and tedium.

3/10

HOME ALONE 2 (US)
THQ, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 32%
We actually preferred the first *Home Alone* game to this, but in the same way that we prefer *Eldorado* to *Santa Barbara*. Another dire scrolling effort that should be left on the shelf. Feeble and predictable.

3/10

HOOK (US/JAP)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Slow-moving, but attractive platformer, that ties in with the film neatly. It's a bit easy to finish, though, so it'll be no, er, Peter Pan.

7/10

THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (US)
Hi Tech Expressions, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 25%

A very poor submarine shoot'-em-up, based on the film of the same name. So repetitive each level is almost identical to the last, apart from the Super Scope-using sub-bit, which is especially useless.

2/10

HUMAN GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP4 82%
If you can live with the 'unique' control system, this is the best Formula 1 game on the SNES. It's blindingly fast, with realistic handling and a useful two-player option.

8/10

HYPERZONE (JAP/US)
Hal, 8 Mbit
1 player
A poor 3D space shoot-'em-up using Mode 7, but with nothing else to recommend it. Tedium City is your only destination.

3/10

IMPERIUM (US)
Alternative name: Assault Suits Dion (JAP)
Vic Tokai, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 40%
Sad, old-fashioned shoot-'em-up with giant robot suits in it – but with little hope of rivalling *Assault Suits Valken*. Stay away.

4/10

THE IREM SKINS GAME (US)
Alternative name: Major Title (JAP)
Irem, 8 Mbit,
1 or 2 players, SP3 83%
Fans of the coin-op golf game *Major Title* will love this – it's virtually identical. Fans of *Pebble Beach* and its cousins mightn't be that impressed by its accuracy.

8/10

JACK NICKLAUS GOLF (US)
Tradewest, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP3 62%
This presents things from just behind the player, but the slow way it draws the screen before each shot, and the could-be-better power meter, ruin it. Not our fave.

6/10

JAKI CRUSH (JAP)
Naxat, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 74%
The SNES needs a top-notch pinball game – something to rival the Mega Drive's *Devil Crash* and the Amiga's *Pinball Dreams*. But this isn't it. It's reasonable, but the ball moves too slowly, and the table isn't brilliantly designed.

7/10

JAMES BOND JR (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 29%
A platform and shooting action game from hell that even the Amstrad GX4000 wouldn't have tolerated. Poor graphics, feeble sound and crap gameplay. Look, but don't buy.

2/10

JEOPARDY (US)
Gametek, 4 Mbit
1 to 3 players, SP7 15%

An appalling American conversion of an appalling American quiz show. Yuck.

1/10

JERRY BOY (JAP)
Alternative name: Smartball (US)
Sony Imagesoft, 8 Mbit
1 player
A run-of-the-mill platform game with only its blob-shaped hero to distinguish it from the crowd. Very average.

6/10

JIMMY CONNORS' PRO TENNIS TOUR (US/UK)
UBI Soft, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 88%
Not as good as *Super Tennis*, but it's close. It has the advantage of working with the four-player adaptor. Now that *is* fun.

8/10

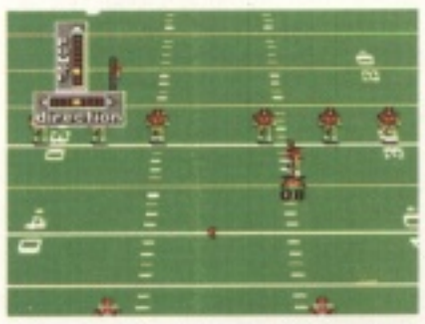
JOE AND MAC (JAP/US/UK)
Data East/Elite, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 72%
A good conversion of the arcade machine. Graphically it's colourful, but the tunes don't vary and the gameplay's repetitive. Young players should enjoy it.

7/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Pro Football (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
What was a fab game on the Mega Drive and Amiga doesn't work on the SNES. Note the flat graphics and jerky scrolling. It *is* fast, but at the expense of playability.

5/10

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL '93 (US/UK)
Alternative name: Pro Football '93 (JAP)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 83%



...whereas this new, improved, updated version is loads better. The changes are mostly cosmetic, but they're enough to elevate the game to the status of 'recommended (if you like American football)'.

8/10

KICK OFF (JAP/UK)
Anco/Imagineer, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 52%
The most controversial computer game ever gets its second conversion to the SNES, and suffers as a result. Not as bad as *Pro Soccer*, but still flawed playability-wise.

5/10

KIKIKAIKAI (JAP)
Natsume, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%
This is the sort of game only the Japanese could write. Underneath the perilously weird exterior lurks a really enjoyable two-player shoot -'em-up with neat graphics and a large playing area.

8/10

KING ARTHUR'S WORLD (UK)
Jaleco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP6 83%
Medieval *Lemmings* lookalike, with good graphics and plenty of interesting features. Very addictive, but the controls (unless you use a mouse) are a pig.

8/10

KING OF THE MONSTERS (JAP/US)
Takara, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A fairly enjoyable Neo Geo game that seems to have been clumsily converted to the SNES. It's really too dull and unimpressive to get even fans of the original excited.

5/10

KOSHIYEN 2 (JAP)
KAC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 70%
This would be the most bog standard baseball game except that it's very weird and very Japanese. Not bad, overall.

7/10

KRUSTY'S SUPER FUN HOUSE (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 79%

A curious blend of pie-throwing, puzzle-solving and platform action make this a refreshing challenge. Graphics and sound are okay, but it's the excellently paced gameplay that makes the game. Passwords should be given more regularly though.

8/10

KUNIO KEN (JAP)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
An odd mix of beat-'em-up and adventure game. We had fun with it, beating people with pillows and suitcases, but we didn't have a clue what was going on as it's all in Japanese. You might be able to suss it out, but it got a lukewarm reception even in Japan.

?/10

LAGOON (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A fairly involving RPG, taking some elements from the *Zelda* series, but forgetting a lot of the more important ones – including a map, which can prove extremely irritating in certain areas. However, the graphics and sound are pleasant enough. Worth considering, but only after you've played *Zelda*, *Final Fantasy II* and *Soul Blazer*.

7/10

LAST FIGHTER TWIN (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Super Deformed robots in a side-on beat-'em-up. Nice graphically and sonically, but limited all the same. For SD fans only.

6/10

LEGEND OF SUCCESS JOE (JAP)
KAC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Japanese boxing game, based on a poor Neo Geo original, with basic graphics and sound, and not enough moves. Still, as boxing games go, it ain't too bad.

6/10

LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA (US)
Alternative name: Goeman 3 (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
One of the best games for the Super Nintendo, mixing RPG adventure-style wandering with side-on platform action. Wonderful music, fab graphics and a real challenge. Though the Japanese version is accessible, buy the US cart to get the best value from this.

9/10

LEMMINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 86%
A hit on every format it's been released on. It takes a while to get to grips with, but *Lemmings* is one of the most original, ingenious and addictive games ever. Each level has a password, and there are loads of them. A *Super Play* fave.

8/10

LETHAL WEAPON (UK/US)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 57%
Unadventurous platform shoot-'em-up, with a frustrating tendency to send you right back to the beginning every time you miss your footing, which you'll do – a lot. Okay, but Ocean can manage better (see the new *Addams Family* game).

5/10

MAGICAL GUY ADVENTURE (JAP)
Bandai, 4 Mbit
1 player
A jolly platform game combining wacky Japanese humour with cute sprites and backdrops. Not in the class of *Super Mario World*, but entertaining anyway.

6/10

MAGIC SWORD (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 58%
Capcom's winning streak is let down by this dreadful slash-'em-up. It slows down badly, and the animation's awful.

5/10

MARIO PAINT (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP6 55%
No game, but a limited, crude paint package – and one where you can't print out your results! Some nifty features, admittedly, but the best thing about the whole package is the mouse that comes with it.

5/10

METAL JACKET (JAP)
Atlus, 8 Mbit
1 player
Horrible. Atlus aren't doing themselves any favours attempting a platform game – a genre where you have to be good to stand out. This is an *E-SWAT* clone with stilted animation, dire sound and inept gameplay.

2/10

MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST(JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 89%
One of the most polished platformers around, though it's marred by the inclusion of infinite continues. Stunning backdrops, sprites and varied enough to impress anyone – it's just a shame it's too easy.

9/10

MONOPOLY (US)
Parker Brothers, 8 Mbit
1 to 8 players, SP7 40%

Monopoly without the fun of cheating. It plays the game on the Super NES exactly as it should, but that's about it.

4/10

MUSYA (JAP/US)
Datam, 8 Mbit
1 player
One of the worst Super Famicom games ever – though it's up against some very stiff competition. Initially, the nicely shaded backdrops give it the look of a *Ninja Spirit* clone, but when you watch your hero mincing about and twiddling his stick, it palls.

3/10

NBA ALL-STAR CHALLENGE (US)
LJN, 8 Mbit
1or 2 players, SP7 59%
If you like basketball, you'll love this game. It plays basketball as it should be played and is nicely presented. Recommended for real fans of the game.

6/10

NHLPA HOCKEY (US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 87%
Not *quite* as good as the Mega Drive version (the graphics are jerky, though you wouldn't notice unless you'd seen the original). Still a great ice hockey game, with loads of playability and atmosphere. **8/10**

NOLAN RYAN'S BASEBALL (US)
Alternative name: Super Stadium (JAP)
Romstar, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 75%
Just as slick as *Extra Innings*, but without the cute characters, and it's slightly trickier to control. Still, not a bad game. **7/10**

NORTH STAR KEN V (JAP)
Toei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
This addition to an inexplicably popular range of *Zelda*-style RPG's – it's based on *Fist Of The North Star*, believe it or not – looks rubbish to us. If you speak Japanese it might, of course, be brilliant, but we doubt it. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

NORTH STAR KEN 6 (JAP)
Toei, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 42%
This has massive sprites but nothing much to actually do. It's just another failed *Street Fighter II*-a-like. **4/10**

OTHELLO WORLD (JAP)
Tsukuda, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Plays a strong game of *Othello* (if you set it to 'difficult'), looks good, and has some cute bits. But why would anyone want to spend $40 on a cartridge that plays *Othello*? Fine for brushing up your technique, but otherwise very sad. **6/10**

PAPER BOY 2 (US/UK)
Mindscape, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 29%
In this game you're a newspaper delivery boy (or girl) and the object is to cycle along, er, delivering newspapers. There are some obstacles to avoid, things to hit with papers for bonus points, and that's about it. It's horribly boring, and really can't be recommended. **2/10**

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS (JAP/US/UK)
T&E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players, SP6 82%

The third addition to the 3D golf series, and, unsurprisingly, very similar to the others. As the only golf game officially released in the UK, this is well worth buying. It's great fun to play and is accurate down to the very waves on the beach, but the porn movie music is laughable. **8/10**

PGA TOUR GOLF (JAP/US/UK)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP5 60%
Slick presentation, masking the fact that this is a poor SNES conversion of a fab sports game. On other systems *PGA Tour* is *the* golf sim, but EA's lack of SNES skill ruins it. **6/10**

PHALANX (JAP/US)
Kemco, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 70%
Horizontally scrolling shoot-'em-ups are two a penny on the Super Nintendo, and a new contender has to be really different to stand out. This one has some decent graphics and challenging gameplay, but is pretty forgettable. **7/10**

PILOTWINGS (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 92%
SNES-owning aviation fans aren't spoilt for choice at present, but this should be enough to, er, spin their propellers. It has a huge range of flying machines, and super-smooth 3D graphics, and there's even a decent game in here, too. **9/10**

PIPEDREAM (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 66%
A well turned-out puzzle where you've got to link different shaped bits of pipe. Okay, but it gets boring fast. **6/10**

PITFIGHTER (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 14%
An appalling conversion of a popular coin-op. Dire graphics and awful gameplay. The pits. **1/10**

POPULOUS (JAP/US/UK)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 85%
The original Jap version of a classic UK game that puts you in the shoes of God. A smashing game, though it *can* get frustrating (and quite boring) eventually. **8/10**

POWER ATHLETE (JAP)
Alternative name: Power Moves (US)
Kaneco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 49%

Another attempt to cash in on *Street Fighter II* that doesn't really work. 'Crap – but in a groovy kind of way', apparently. **5/10**

PRINCE OF PERSIA (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
A superb conversion of the computer classic with new graphics, a brilliant intro and a fab *Lawrence Of Arabia*-style soundtrack. Not an easy game, but the password system allows progression without too much trouble. A classic. **9/10**

PRO BASEBALL LEAGUE '93 (JAP)
Sony Music Entertainment, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 77%
The Jap sequel to *Extra Innings*. It's got cute characters, slick animation and some neat extra bits. If you like baseball, you'll love this. **7/10**

PRO QUARTERBACK (US)
Tradewest Sports, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 62%
American football looks great with neat Mode 7 graphics, but the rest of the game fails to add up to anything better than usual. **6/10**

PRO SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: World League Soccer (US)
Imagineer, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
A really shaky conversion of *Kick Off*, with crude graphics and hopeless gameplay. **3/10**

PSYCHO DREAM (JAP)
Riot, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 33%

Platform beat-'em-up with lots of Japanese text getting in the way. Very bland. **3/10**

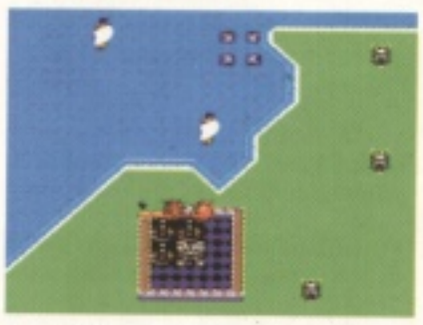
PUSHOVER (US/UK)
Ocean, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 78%
An enjoyable domino toppling-style puzzle game, converted from home computers, with lots of short-term fun. Once all 100 levels are completed, however, it's unlikely you'll ever return to it. **7/10**

Q*BERT 3 (JAP/US)
NTVIC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 67%
Real nostalgia value, as players of the 10-year-old coin-op will confirm. And plenty of effort's gone into making it look the part. But it's only mildly amusing. **6/10**

RACE DRIVIN' (US/UK)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP3 35%
Fans of the original coin-op will be horrified by this driving game. 3D polygons and the SNES go together like, um, chips and custard. Poor programming on unsuitable hardware. **3/10**

RAIDEN DENSETSU (JAP)
Alternative name: Raiden Trad (US)
Toei, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A great game on the PC Engine and Mega Drive, but slow on the Super Nintendo and not recommended. It should have been good, but the programmers were too inexperienced on the machine to do the job properly. **4/10**

RAMPART (US)
Electronic Arts, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 79%



So primitive-looking you wonder why it was allowed to live. (Well, apart from the great 3D bit.) But a few minutes playing reveal a game that's actually fab fun, and two-player mode almost rivals *Mario Kart*. **8/10**

RANMA 1/2 (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A neat one-on-one beat-'em-up with some very odd anime characters (who change sex when they get wet, and sometimes into giant pandas – don't worry, there's a Japanese TV series explaining it all). Mismatching of characters is a problem, but on the whole it's great to look at and play. **8/10**

RANMA 1/2 PART TWO (JAP)
NCS Masiya, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 71%
Cute, unusual characters, and a good looking beat-'em-up, but far too easy, with some characters much, much stronger than others. Slightly inferior to the original, but still likable, at least. **7/10**

RIVAL TURF (JAP/US/UK)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 58%
Final Fight's main rival. Not as 'together' as its opponent – more repetitive baddies and rougher animation are the main qualms – but it has the enormous advantage of simultaneous two-player action, including a *Street Fighter II*-style head-to-head mode. Which one do you go for? Um, well there's always *Turtles*... **6/10**

ROAD RIOT (US)
THQ, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 20%
Road Riot's the worst driving game on the Super Nintendo, we reckon. This is really primitive in every respect, despite a split-screen two-player mode, and no fun at all. **2/10**

ROAD RUNNER: DEATH VALLEY RALLY (JAP/US/UK)
Sunsoft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 42%
The atmosphere of the cartoon is captured perfectly, with wonderful cartoony graphics and hilarious intro and outro sequences, but the game itself stinks – it's just a simplistic, poorly-executed platform game. For *Road Runner* die-hards only. **4/10**

THE ROCKETEER (JAP/US)
IGS, 8 Mbit
1 player
Lovely graphics, but that's about it. It consists of watching a string of mini-games in which you don't really get much say – it's just luck if you proceed from one game to the next. Awful. **3/10**

ROBOCOP 3 (US/UK)
Ocean, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 66%

A neat *Robocop* feel, but gameplay-wise this is severely wanting. It's frustratingly difficult, and perseverance is rewarded by an unimaginative shooter with little connection to the film. **6/10**

ROGER CLEMENS' MVP BASEBALL (US)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 73%
Baseball games don't come much better presented than this. Fab animation and action viewed through different camera angles make this thoroughly enjoyable. **7/10**

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS II (JAP/US)
Koei, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 12 players
Loads of interlocking ancient Chinese kingdoms make alliances, split up, then make other alliances, lots of people (presumably) get killed, and we can't make sense of any of it. The recently-become-available US version reveals a simple little game under all the maps and text-boxes, but still not recommended. **5/10**

RPM RACING (JAP/US)
Interplay, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
RPM stands, in this case, for Radical Psycho Machines – ridiculous trucks with big tyres that fascinate Americans. The scrolling's rough, you need clairvoyant powers to anticipate corners, and it uses flickery interlace graphics to no obvious effect. But good fun. **6/10**

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 UNDERWATER BITS

Underwater bits? We just can't get enough of 'em here at *Super Play*. They're just so... watery. There's nothing at all wishy-washy about this little lot.

1 AXELAY (85%)
Watery, wet, wild and chock full of face-hugger-type things. Some fab bubbles, too.

2 PUGSLEY'S SCAVENGER HUNT (90%)
Notable for its really sweet underwater cats (who go 'miaow').

3 BART'S NIGHTMARE (91%)
So watery you'll have to keep pausing the game to go to the loo.

4 MICKEY'S MAGICAL QUEST (89%)
More 'under-sap' than 'underwater', but its heart's in the right place.

5 SUPER R-TYPE (72%)
Er, hang on. The *arcade* version had more water in it than this Super Nintendo conversion.

INDEPENDENT SUPER NINTENDO MAGAZINE
SUPER PLAY

TOP 5 IN-GAME SHOPS

Shops? We can't get enough of 'em here at *Super Play*. You can go into them, buy some things and then you can go out again. What more could you want? We've picked out five of our favourites (well, four of them anyway).

1 **LEGEND OF THE MYSTICAL NINJA**
Not just shops, but also an arcade tent, packed with arcade games (Including *Gradius*) to play. Fab!

2 **ZELDA III (93%)**
There are loads of shops in *Zelda*, but this shooting gallery is easily one of the best. Hours of fun!

3 **UN SQUADRON (89%)**
The real McCoy! (Er, Mr McCoy's the shopkeeper's name.) A Mig 29 and quarter of pear drops, please.

4 **GODS (74%)**
Doesn't look too hot, but the choice of weapons you can get here is enormous!

5 **COOL WORLD (52%)**
Erm, actually, this one's pretty crap, but we were fast running out of shops.

RUSHING BEAT RUN (JAP)
Jaleco, 12 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 60%

The original *Rival Turf*, although fine as beat-'em-ups go, was never brilliant, exactly. And this sequel isn't a great deal better. The graphics aren't bad, but it's very repetitive and too easy to finish. **6/10**

SD DODGEBALL (JAP)
Banpresto, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players
Based on an imaginary sport which involves knocking out the opposing team by throwing the ball at them, this is one of a series of Dodgeball games (*Fire Dodgeball's* another), and the worst. **5/10**

SD GREAT BATTLE (JAP)
Banpresto, 6 Mbit
1 player
Japan's popular Super Deformer series has spawned a lot of Super Famicom spin-off games, and they sell, no matter how cruddy they are! *SD Great Battle* was the first of the genre, and isn't that great, being a crusty old arcade adventure with tedious game-play. You have been warned. **4/10**

SD GUNDAM (JAP)
Bandai, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Again we head off to Japanese RPG-land, this variant starring a 'Super Deformed' version of *Gundam*, the most popular 'mecha' robot character in Japan. The format is traditional Japanese RPG, but the crappy graphics, sound and Jap text make it unplayable. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

SIM CITY (JAP/US/UK)
Maxis/Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 84%
Build the city of your dreams... then bring it to its knees! The SNES version of this all-time great is probably the best yet (even more user-friendly) but it doesn't push the SNES to its limits. Addictive, for a bit. **8/10**

SIM EARTH (JAP)
Imagineer, 6 Mbit + BB
1 player
A follow-on from *Sim City* that tries to bite off more than it can chew. You're basically put in charge of the entire planet, which would be horrendous enough in itself, but when the whole game's in Japanese... er, no thanks. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

SKÜLJAGGER (US)
American Softworks, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 58%
A lacklustre piratic platform game that's very easy and not going to take you long to finish. Very weird bubble gum bits. **5/10**

SONIC BLAST MAN (JAP)
Taito, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%

A scrolling beat-'em-up with a nifty central character – he's a superhero with a deadly line in punches. It's a beat-'em-up, though, and so gets pretty dull. **7/10**

SOUL BLAZER (US)
Alternative title: Soul Blader (JAP)
Enix, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 89%
Slick, graphically gorgeous and not entirely unlike *Zelda* (ie an RPG, Japanese-style). Avoid *Soul Blader*, the Japanese version (unless you're Japanese). **9/10**

SPACE FOOTBALL (US)
Alternative name: Super Linearball (JAP)
Triffix, 4 Mbit
1 player
If you've played *Ballblazer* on the Commodore 64 before, that's probably the closest to this – football, played between two 'things' on a fast, 3D scrolling pitch. It' provides lots of thrills in the short-term, but it isn't enough to justify spending this much on a game. **6/10**

SPANKY'S QUEST (JAP/US)
Natsume, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A monkey called Spanky? Bouncing bubbles? You just wander round lots of similar-looking screens, killing baddies (with the bubbles) and collecting keys. Boring. **5/10**

SPIDERMAN & THE X-MEN (US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 72%
A multi-character platform romp that loses its appeal fast. Unattractive graphics are only saved by imaginative music. Fun for a bit, but it's dated already. **7/10**

SPINDIZZY WORLDS (JAP/US/UK)
Ascii, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 69%
Spindizzy's sparkle seems to have dulled a little since its heyday on the Spectrum, partly thanks to the game's shift of emphasis from exploration to puzzle solving. A neat little thing all the same. **7/10**

STARFOX (JAP/US)
Alternative name: Starwing (UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 93%
What can we say? This is totally brilliant. It's the first game to use the new Super FX chip, it's got some of the most spectacular and well designed 3D bits ever, it's very smooth and fast – it's the bee's knees, basically. We've been playing it in the *Super Play* offices non-stop. **9/10**

STREET FIGHTER II (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 16 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 94%
This is the game that's selling SNESs by the bucket- load. It's 'streets' ahead of other beat-'em-ups, and a near-perfect conversion of the coin-op. A must-buy, though expensive on official release. **9/10**

STRIKE GUNNER (JAP/US/UK)
Athena, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 65%
Average vertical blaster, with unvaried backdrops, but nice sprites and explosions. A dull game that only works in two-player mode. **6/10**

SUPER ADVENTURE ISLAND (JAP/US/UK)
Hudson Soft, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 75%
Simplistic, *Wonderboy*-style gameplay in this third instalment of the series made popular on the NES. Aside from the ugly Master Higgins, the bright backgrounds and impressive Yuzo Koshiro dance tunes make this an attractive game. A bit confusing, but otherwise fab. **7/10**

SUPER ALESTE (JAP/UK)
Alternative name: Space Megaforce (US)
Toho/Compile, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP3 87%
Evidence that the SNES can handle a manic *Gunhed*-style shooter with ease. Fab sprite handling (Mode 7) and no slow-down mean it's more a technical achievement than that well designed, and it's a bit weapon-mad. But an excellent buy. **8/10**

SUPER BASEBALL SIMULATOR 1,000 (JAP/US)
Culture Brain, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 49%
Another middling baseball game. The pitching and batting are good, but the fielders are unco-operative and the graphics poor, with pointless Mode 7 whizzing about. The music's good, though. **5/10**

SUPER BASES LOADED (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 55%
This works okay, but it's just as limited in scope as other baseball games on the SNES, and the graphics are jerky. **5/10**

SUPER BASES LOADED II (US)
Alternative name: Super Professional Baseball II (JAP)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 69%
Extraordinarily and uncannily similar to *Super Bases Loaded I*. (See above.) **7/10**

SUPER BASKETBALL (UK)
Alternative names: NCAA Basketball (US), Super Dunkshot (JAP)
HAL, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 84%
This is famous for its 3D graphics – the pitch spins and zooms in and out impressively. It's got brilliant sound effects, too. And it plays great basketball. A bit confusing, but otherwise fab. **8/10**

SUPER BATTER UP (US)
Namco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 53%
A difficult-to-control baseball game, with garish graphics and poor animation. There are so many better ones out there. **5/10**

SUPER BATTLETANK (JAP/US)
Absolute, 4 Mbit
1 player
The prehistoric *Battlezone* coin-op gets a new lease of life in this Gulf War tank game. This looks livelier than the wire-frame graphics of the original, and has some good explosions and exciting link sequences, but, frankly, it's still boring. **5/10**

SUPER BIKURI MAN (JAP)
Interbec, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP7 18%

Far too easy to finish. Possibly the second worst beat-'em-up ever (after *PitFighter*). **1/10**

SUPER BIRDIE RUSH (JAP)
Data East, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
A cute cartoony-looking golf game with well drawn fairways and greens. However, this isn't as playable as *Hole-in-One*. **7/10**

SUPER BOWLING (JAP/US)
Athena, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 48%
There isn't enough to bowling to fill out a whole game. This one pads itself out with neat graphical interludes etc, but the real thing's so much more fun. **4/10**

SUPER CASTLEVANIA IV (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
A huge, sprawling sequel to the NES games. After a dull start this turns into one of the best platform games ever. More action is needed, but superb

parallax and incredible soundtracks generate an atmosphere that's appreciated by serious gamers. 9/10

SUPER CHINESE WORLD (JAP)
Culture Brain, 8 Mbit
1 player
A sequel to the popular 8-bit Famicom game *Little Ninja Bros*. The overhead viewpoint changes at regular intervals for combat. Cutish but rather basic, with loads of Japanese text. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER CUP SOCCER (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Goal (US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
A rival to *Super Soccer*? Not really. This takes a side-on, jerkily scrolling viewpoint and isn't going to impress anyone. That's a shame, because it goes into lots of detail – moves and rules-wise – and there are some nice graphical touches. 6/10

SUPER DOUBLE DRAGON (JAP/US)
Technos, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 68%
A wide variety of moves, and some very satisfying thumping and kicking action, inject a bit of life into a deceptively crappy looking beat-'em-up. Enjoyable, but a bit easy and rather '8-bit' all round. 7/10

SUPER EDF (JAP/US)
Jaleco, 8 Mbit
1 player
A pretty, horizontally scrolling effort, but with some boring and unchallenging gameplay. Similar to the coin-op it's based on, *EDF* has some well drawn backdrops and sprites. But the music is really bland, and slow-down spoils the action. 6/10

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP1 83%
This looks ordinary, but is one of the few overhead-view racing games that works. Fast, with a good 'driving feel' and plenty of options to cater for the long-term player. Recommended. 8/10

SUPER F1 CIRCUS (JAP)
Nichibutsu, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Limited edition. As above, but with real Grand Prix names. 8/10

SUPER F1 GRAND PRIX (JAP)
Video System Co, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Nothing to do with the popular Amiga *F1 Grand Prix*, this is along the same lines as *Battle Grand Prix*, without the split-screen two-player mode. That means you get to see more of the track on-screen, and hence slightly more warning of corners coming up, but not much. 5/10

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players

Nowhere near as smart-looking as *WWF*, but a much more challenging game (the 20 available wrestlers all behave differently, for a start). But in one-player mode it's virtually impossible to beat the computer. Okay, if you can live with the dull visuals and manage to haul in a friend. 6/10

SUPER FIRE PRO WRESTLING 2 (JAP)
Human, 8 Mbit
1 to 4 players, SP7 72%
This has lots of Japanese text, laughable graphics and is completely crap as a one-player game, but it's great fun to play with four players using the Super Multitap adaptor. 7/10

SUPER GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS (JAP/US/UK)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP2 85%
Another sequel, unique to the SNES. It's got some brill graphics (with loads of slow-down) and nice tunes, but it's very tough – and, as it lacks battery back-up or passwords, it can be very frustrating. The huge levels only have a few restart points, too. Well put together, but difficult. 8/10

SUPER MARIO KART (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP1 93%

The best driving game ever, the best two-player game ever. It's perfect. Four brilliant games in one: there's the Grand Prix game, the Time Trial, the two-player Head to Head, and the amazing balloon game. 9/10

SUPER MARIO WORLD (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 94%
What more can we say about this huge game? On the downside, the backgrounds are repetitive, but this is a gameplayer's dream come true – you'll want to spend weeks deciphering it. Though real *Mario* aficionados tend to prefer Mario's third trip, this remains (along with *Zelda*) Nintendo's flagship game. 9/10

SUPER NBA BASKETBALL (JAP/US)
Tecmo, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 86%
While *Super Basketball/Super Dunkshot* is the basketball game to go for if you want to wow your friends, this one is a bit more playable, accurate and comprehensive. 8/10

SUPER NINJA (JAP)
Koei, 12 Mbit + BB
1 player
You'd never know this was 12 meg – it has the flat colours, simple graphics and laughable animation of an early NES game. It uses the same overhead view as *Zelda* et al, but being Japanese is impossible to play. Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER OFF ROAD (JAP/US/UK)
Trade West, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Another overhead view driving game, but we're allowed to see the whole track for once (phew). We're racing monster trucks with a 3D(ish) perspective. The trucks look great bouncing about, and, short-term, it's good fun. And great music. 7/10

SUPER PANG (JAP)
Alternative name: Super Buster Bros (US)
Capcom, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
The arcade original was a fantastic game, but one that allowed two people to pop bubbles at once. This is a good conversion, with smart graphics and plenty of speed, but unfortunately only one can play, and that gets boring. 7/10

SUPER PARODIUS (UK)
Alternative name: Parodius (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player
A fab conversion of the coin-op, that easily ranks as the best of Konami's recent string of classics. Superbly colourful sprites, a hilarious sense of the bizarre, and excellent music are the icing on the cake. Very enjoyable (though a little easy). 9/10

SUPER PLAY ACTION FOOTBALL (US)
Nintendo, 4 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP2 71%
A faithful implementation of American football that'll please fans, but not the *John Madden*-basher we've been waiting for. Not a patch on *Madden '93*... 7/10

SUPER PROBOTECTOR (UK)
Alternative names: Contra 3 (US)/Contra Spirits (JAP)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 90%
The best platform shoot-'em-up around. Superb use of Mode 7 and amazing sound put this in the super league. Brill two-player action makes it essential stuff. 9/10

SUPER R-TYPE (JAP/US/UK)
Irem, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 72%
Beautifully designed baddies, and some of the best graphics on the SNES, make this one of the best-looking shooters around. Not perfect, thanks to jerky scrolling, terrible slow-down and no restart points. It also lacks the best parts of the coin-op – *R-Type II*, surprisingly, not the original game – on which it's based. 7/10

SUPER SHANGHAI (JAP)
Hot B, 8 Mbit
1 player
It's hard to see what's 'super' about it, other than a show-offy intro and the odd silly sound effect, but as a version of *Shanghai*, the puzzle game, it works. Relaxing and compulsive, but not great. 6/10

SUPER SMASH TV (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 84%
A translation of the ultra-violent coin-op, this is incredibly good short-term fun. No slow-down, plenty of tough bits and bags of addictiveness – you'll keep coming back to it. Recommended. 8/10

SUPER SOCCER (US/UK)
Alternative name: Super Formation Soccer (JAP)
Human/Nintendo, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 83%
This is probably the closest you'll get to real footy on the SNES. Impressive 3D graphics, and jolly good fun to play. But it doesn't really feel much like football as such, perhaps because the rules have been messed around a bit. We're still waiting for the SNES' equivalent of *Sensible Soccer*. 8/10

SUPER STAR WARS (JAP/US)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP4 89%

The music is the first thing that hits you – a perfect rendition of all the best tunes from the film – followed by the fantastic *Star Wars*y feel that pervades the whole thing. If you loved the film, you'll love this too. (Oh, and it's great fun to play, too.) 9/10

SUPER SWIV (JAP/UK)
Alternative name: Firepower 2000 (US)
The Sales Curve, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 82%
A slick and playable two-player shoot-'em-up, with great graphics, and interesting controls. Good fun, if a little boring in the long run? 8/10

SUPER TENNIS (JAP/US/UK)
Tonkin House, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 92%
One of the best tennis games on any machine (only rivalled by two fab tennis games on the PC Engine). The range of shots available is amazing. It's not all bashing a ball backwards and forwards, either – there's a comprehensive line-up of tournaments and things to enter, too. Brilliant. 9/10

SUPER TETRIS 2 + BOMBLISS (JAP)
Bullet-Proof Software, 8 Mbit + BB
1 or 2 players, SP5 83%
Tetris is probably the best puzzle game ever, but doesn't always convert well to different formats. No worries with the SNES version, though, which boasts lots of extra bits (like *Bombliss*) in addition to a solid rendition of the original game. 8/10

SUPER VALLIS IV (JAP/US)
Telenet, 8 Mbit
1 player
A conversion of the PC Engine CD ROM game, featuring the exploits of lots of Japanese girlies but no excitement. It's too contrived, boring and linear to live. 5/10

SUPER VOLLEY II (JAP)
Video System, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP5 82%
Weird-looking, with a determinedly two-dimensional perspective. But a wealth of 'special moves', and the fact that's it's a coin-op conversion, make a game that's fab fun to play – especially with two players. 8/10

SUPER WAGAN ISLAND (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player
Funny, with cute graphics and likeable characters, this is a semi-arcade, semi-text-based adventure for the younger player – we got a fair way into it without understanding what was going on. (It's all in Japanese!) Impossible to judge. ?/10

SUPER WWF (JAP/US/UK)
Acclaim, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP1 74%
Marvellous graphics, and enormous fun to play – short-term. But, all the wrestlers behave the same. And there's no tournament system like on other versions, either – you win or lose a fight and that's it. *WWF* isn't recommended. 7/10

SUZUKI F1 (UK)
Alternative name: Aguri Suzuki F1 Super Driving (JAP)
LOZC, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Fast, 3D Mode 7 courses *and* tunnels and bridges? This game is very well presented, but suffers from the no-warning-of-corners problem that plagues SNES driving games. However, the split-screen two-player mode is a bonus. 7/10

SYVALION (JAP/UK)
JVC, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 46%
An odd maze-based scrolling shoot-'em-up where you guide a dragon down baddy-infested passages. It looks tacky but is actually quite good. Not much of a challenge, though, and not one you'll return to. 5/10

TERMINATOR (UK)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 59%

Average film-based shoot-'em-up that copes with the film side OK, but fails to make much of the actual game. Very dark graphics, but, admittedly, a great soundtrack. 5/10

TEST DRIVE II: THE DUEL (US/UK)
Accolade, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP6 58%
A fairy good conversion of the PC original to SNES, but it's difficult to control so you tend to crash all the time. Very unexciting driving feel too. 5/10

THE KING OF RALLY (JAP)
Meldac, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 39%
The most eye-catching 3D effect in years, but that's really about it. The fact that there are no other cars on the road, and the very unimaginative design of the courses, turns into a real battle just to keep your eyes open. 4/10

THUNDER SPIRITS (JAP/US)
Toshiba EMI, 8 Mbit
1 player

A conversion of the well respected Mega Drive game *Thunderforce 3*, but it isn't as good on the SNES – slow-down spoils the action! Everything else is very similar to the MD game – ie no effort has been made to use any of the special features that the SNES can offer – which results in rather a missed opportunity. 6/10

TINY TOONS (JAP/US)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 89%
The ultimate in cartoon-style graphics, animation and sound, with bags of variety and challenge. It's in danger of being *too* cute, but it's impossible not to love it. 9/10

TKO BOXING (US)
Alternative name: World Championship Boxing (JAP)
Sofel, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players
Boxing games are difficult to pull off, and this is the kind of thing that happens as a result. It's well presented, but the gameplay is really simplistic and gets boring fast. Steer well clear. 3/10

TOP GEAR (US/UK)
Alternative name: Top Racer (JAP)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP3 76%
So fast it'll make your eyes go squiffy. The screen is divided down the middle so two players can compete – it's dull as a one-player game. It was developed by Gremlin, so fans of their *Lotus* games will be on familiar ground here. No smooth Mode 7 graphics or elaborate trackside detail, just lots of driving fun. 7/10

TURTLES IV: TURTLES IN TIME (JAP/US/UK)
Konami, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP2 84%
This is a very good beat-'em-up. Superb graphics, some clever characterisation, frantic gameplay, and a terrific assortment of different levels means plenty of fun. On the downside, it does get repetitive, and doesn't take long to finish. 8/10

ULTIMATE FOOTBALL (JAP)
Sammy, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players
American football – what a ridiculous sport, eh? Still, that needn't prevent *Ultimate Football* from being a decent game. The problem is that this is so limited in both scope and technical merit that it can't really be recommended to anyone except real footy fans. 6/10

ULTRAMAN (JAP/US/UK)
Bandai, 8 Mbit
1 player
At first it's laughable: a ridiculous-looking giant superhero beating up monsters that look like people in rubber suits. But then you realise that's how it's meant to be. This is based on those dreadful Japanese disaster movies you occasionally see on Channel 4. Laughable. 4/10

UNCHARTED WATERS (JAP/US)
Koei, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 37%
A naval strategy game where you sail around a map, trading goods, expanding your fleet and fighting other ships. It won't last you long – as it's all so boring. 3/10

UN SQUADRON (US/UK)
Alternative name: Area 88 (JAP)
Capcom, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 91%
Brilliantly designed pseudo-conversion of the coin-op, and still one of the best games on the Super Nintendo. Although

it slows down in places, the action is still exciting. Sonically average, but graphically superb, and a *Super Play* favourite. **9/10**

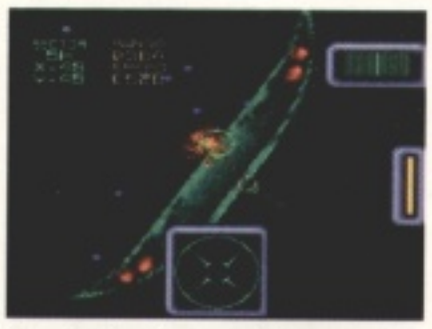
USHIO AND TORA (JAP)
Yutaka, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 35%

A very poor scrolling beat-'em-up, where you only have two moves and infinite continues. Adds nothing to the genre. **3/10**

VOLLEYBALL TWIN (JAP)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP4 76%
Volleyball from the people who brought us *Super Tennis*. The slow scrolling tends to knacker your chances of receiving the ball from time to time, but otherwise it plays pretty solidly (and the Beach Volley is something else). **7/10**

WAIALAE COUNTRY CLUB (JAP/US)
T & E Soft, 8 Mbit + BB
1 to 4 players
This is the second of three golf games all using the same programming and graphics (the other two being *Augusta Golf* and *Pebble Beach*) but all representing different courses. Accurately depicted and probably the best golf series on the Super Nintendo by far. **8/10**

WARPSPEED (US/UK)
Accolade, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP7 32%



Very dated and very crudely presented space shoot-'em-up in the *Wing Commander* mould. When you've got the brilliant *Starfox* to choose instead, there's just no comparison. **3/10**

WHEEL OF FORTUNE (US)
Gametek, 4 Mbit
1 to 2 players, SP2 19%
A really tedious quiz-show conversion that shouldn't have happened at all. A guest appearance by Vanna White is perhaps the only reason we actually gave it a mark at all. **1/10**

WING COMMANDER (US)
Mindscape, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP5 60%
A big 3D spaceship sim/shoot-'em-up thing. Overrated in its original PC form, and a less-than-sparkling SNES conversion doesn't help matters. But, having said that, it's not actually *bad*. **6/10**

WINGS II (US)
Alternative names: Sky Mission (JAP), Blazing Skies (UK)
Namco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP2 71%
Not quite as impressive as the screenshots (see *Super Play* issue 2) make it out to be, but still an undeniably attractive and atmospheric World War I game. It's also the only existing Super Nintendo flight sim where you can actually shoot things. **7/10**

WORDTRIS (US)
Spectrum Holobyte, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 40%
Tetris-based puzzle game (aren't they all?), with some potential. However, assorted glaring faults (chiefly that it gives you no time to think, resulting in far too great an element of luck) make it one to avoid. **4/10**

WORLD CLASS RUGBY (JAP/UK)
Misawa Entertainment Co, 4 Mbit
1 or 2 players, SP6 74%
The only rugby game on the SNES, and a good one at that. Imagine a polished *Kick Off* with odd-shaped balls and you're there. **7/10**

XANDRA'S BIG ADVENTURE (JAP)
Namcot, 8 Mbit
1 player, SP1 88%

This is an obscure platform game that ought to be much better known, with a great central character. The controls are extremely versatile and unusual and the game's as tough as anyone could ever hope for. Unfortunately, a fair bit of Japanese text spoils things too, but if you're the adventurous type, it's great fun. **8/10**

XARDION (JAP/US)
Asmik, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
From the makers of *D Force* comes another disaster! This time it's an *E-SWAT* clone – you control a robot that must progress through different zones, each with a guardian. Sounds okay, but the dreadful graphics, awful sonics, and pathetic gameplay and structure ruin it. **4/10**

X-ZONE (US)
Kemco, 4 Mbit
1 player, SP6 55%
Nice bit of kit, that Super Scope – shame about the games. This has the dubious distinction of being the best so far, but it still ain't saying much. Oh dear. **5/10**

YS III (JAP/US)
Tonkin House, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
Not as good as the prequel (*YS Books 1 & 2*) on the PC-Engine CD ROM, but this is still a top quality RPG. Instead of an overview of the landscape, you get a scrolling side-on perspective, and though it's not as big as the first two games, it's fun. **7/10**

ZAN II (JAP)
Wolf Team, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player
A pretty full-screen map view – and plenty of territory to conquer, but working out what else it boasts proves difficult. Another unintelligible -to-Brits war game. Impossible to judge. **?/10**

ZELDA: A LINK TO THE PAST (JAP/US/UK)
Nintendo, 8 Mbit + BB
1 player, SP2 93%
A brilliantly designed and implemented adventure that puts similar games to shame, in much the same way as *Mario* dominates the platform world – unsurprising, when Nintendo's top programmer was involved in both games. This is, of course, utterly fabulous, though *Zelda* addicts may complain it's not quite as long and drawn out as previous games. **9/10**

Don't forget, if a game's not in What Cart? then write and tell us. Send the details with a short review to: *Super Play*, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, and we might print it and send you a prize! Yowza!

SUPER

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- Super Famicom games for sale – *Super Mario IV* £15, *Magic Sword* £20, *Dinosaurs* £25, *F1 Exhaust Heat* £25. Tel: Benny (081) 842 2879.
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- Super NES games wanted. American or Jap. Willing to pay £25 for *Mario*, *Zelda*, *Mystical Ninja*, or what have you. Tel: (0782) 811506.
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S CRIBE!

REMEMBER ME? SUPER PLAY HAVEN'T

(Sniff.) As you may remember, last month *Super Play* asked me, Neko, to explain the benefits of a *Super Play* subscription. It was on a trial basis type of thing – if it worked, I stayed, if it didn't, I went. It was as simple as that.

Well, lots of people went for it. Hundreds of you, in fact. *Super Play*'s subscriptions department have been snowed under with people eager to see me survive. And I'd like to say a big 'thanks very much' to everyone who returned their coupon.

But apparently it just wasn't good enough. They weren't impressed. They wanted more. (More! Would you credit it?) As a result, I haven't been fed since last Thursday, my tummy won't stop rumbling and, quite honestly, things are looking pretty grim. Unless an awful lot more people subscribe to *Super Play* this month, it looks like I'm for it.

And – hey! Painfully transparent sales ploys aside, a subscription to *Super Play* really does make sense. If the number of distressed phonecalls the office receives each month is anything to go by, *Super Play* sells out dangerously fast. Subscribers *never* have to worry about missing an issue. Think, too, about how much terrific stuff there is in each issue – reviews, playing tips, news, features and all the rest of it.

So, please, I'm begging you – subscribe! I'm really, really hungry and very cold, and the chances of my surviving till next month seem (sniff) pretty slim...

Neko should stay! He's doing a great job! I mean, I'm subscribing, aren't I? (And maybe ordering the odd back issue while I'm at it.) Here're the details:

Subscription Prices

UK	£27
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Please send me the following back issues at £2.50 each

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This coupon is valid until 30 June 1993. SU/MAG/0693

BACK ISSUES

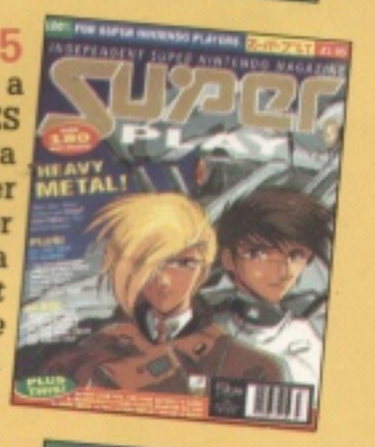
ISSUE 1
The first ever issue! Featuring a complete guide to the Super NES, games like *Mario Kart*, and a free pin badge!

ISSUE 2
Bigger and better, with a feature on baseball games, tons on *Zelda*, a Japanese show report and more!

ISSUE 3
A free poster, loads on CD ROM, a giant *Super Mario World* guide, but – oh no! Sold out!

ISSUE 4
Loads about special chips in game carts, plus *Super Star Wars*, tips to *Actraiser* and much more!

ISSUE 5
Boasts a giant CES report, a four-player adaptor feature, a *Desert Strike* guide and more!



ISSUE 6
Starfox previewed, Japanese comics revealed, a giant poster and the best *SFII* tips yet! Wow!

ISSUE 7
Loads on Japanese RPGs, loads on *Starfox*, SNES joysticks and pads, *Mickey Mouse* and more!

NEXT MONTH

IN SUPER PLAY!

GAME SCHOOLS SPECIAL!

In Japan they have special schools where young potential programmers go to learn how to program top console games (!) What's it like inside these places? What do they actually learn? And how many of them get jobs at Nintendo (or Capcom. Or Konami.) afterwards? We take an in-depth look next issue. (And no – this isn't some sort of joke.)

GAME MUSIC SPECTACULAR!

Resident game music freak Jason Brookes looks at the world of game music CDs, the work of some of the world's top game music composers and more. It's a long overdue look at a much neglected part of the overall game 'package' if ever we saw one!

Just three of the many Japanese game music CDs available – love it, or loathe it!

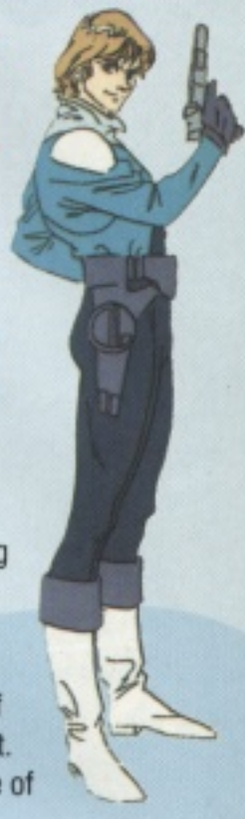
REVIEWED!

In next month's *Super Play* you can look forward to reviews of *Alien*³ (spooky, futuristic alien-blasting), *Powermonger* (3D strategy), *Super Bomberman* (or *Dynablaster*), *Populous 2* (3D strategy), *Super Turrican* (platform shoot-'em-up with Dolby Surround Sound), *Bubsy* (will it be a cat-astrophe?), *Toys* (well, you never know...), *Super Conflict* (a wargame), *Ultraseven* (an *Ultraman* beat-'em-up), *Super Famistar 2* (another brill baseball game – honest!), *International Tennis Tour*, *Great Battle 3* (a beat-'em-up), *Shanghai 2* (a puzzle game) and *Super Dunkstar* (held over from last month).

TIPPED!

If ever a game needed a complete player's guide, it's *Pugsley's Scavenger Hunt*. So we'll be doing one – in the next issue. We'll also have a comprehensive Super Player's Guide to *Ranma 1/2 Part Two*, detailing all those tricky moves. And if you think that's an end to our tips, you're wrong – we've got pages more of them too.

JAPANESE GAMES – THE INSIDE STORY



Is this our newest agent? Or this? Or this? Ha! We're onto you, Nintendo, and we're not telling! Stop our man (or indeed woman. Or mole) this time, if you can!

Every month, for as long as we can remember, we've promised to bring you a full report on the inner workings of Japanese games development. Every month we've equipped one of the world's top surveillance specialists with the latest in technology and dropped him into the heart of Japan's games industry. And every month, inexplicably, he's failed, and come back with his tail between his legs (if he's come back at all). The latest casualty was 'Chainsaw' Charlie Chipsnapper; barely had he buried his parachute than Nintendo's security was all over him.

But we've learnt from Charlie's failure, and that of those who preceded him. And we think we've come up with an answer, an explanation for the inexplicable. In fact, when you think about it, it couldn't be more obvious. The Japanese have had advance intelligence on our movements. And they've been reading it right here in *Super Play*, every month, on the Next Month page. Are we stupid or what?

So here's the plan: this month we're not going to tell you anything at all about the man (or, indeed, woman) who we've picked for our latest attempt, except to say that he (or she) is exceptionally tough and, with the aid of our new policy of silence, can't conceivably fail. We can confidently predict, therefore, that next month we'll be bringing you a massive feature detailing every last aspect of the Japanese games industry.

PLUS!

We'll have a new regular addition to Live From Hell City, in which our Japanese correspondent Peter Evans checks out the newest Japanese RPGs, and rates their chances of translation into English. And last – but by no means least – we'll have more on *Street Fighter II Turbo* too!

The ninth issue of *Super Play* bounds into your local newsagent, tail wagging and tongue lolling, on Thursday 3 June.

ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY!

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Dear newsagent, please reserve/deliver* my copy of *Super Play* for me every month. Cheers!

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*** Delete as appropriate.**

MAG*SAVE

SUPER QUIZ

THE ANSWERS!

Remember that oh-so-tricky fun quiz we ran for you on page 15? Got stuck, did you? Well, here are the answers...

1) *Super Mario Kart*
2) Chicago
3) *Pilotwings*
4) Acclaim
5) *Gradius*, the coin-op. (However, we will accept the first Super Nintendo game the ship appeared in, *Gradius 3*.)
6) Capcom
7) Malibu
8) 2,000,000 (!)
9) Akira Toriyama
10) Start with 32 multiply it by 6, take away 194 (which gives you a minus number), multiply that by 5, add 12, add 94, take away 26, and add 46 gives you 116, which gives you Ocean, which gives you Manchester, which gives you Jason, which gives you JAL, which gives you Tokyo, which gives you Toto, who is a dog. As your answer we'll take any awful game, be it *Pitfighter*, *D Force* or *Road Riot* et al. Simple, eh?

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KONAMI

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